

SOME GREAT STORIES  
AND HOW TO TELL THEM

RICHARD THOMAS WYCHE



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# SOME GREAT STORIES AND HOW TO TELL THEM

BY

RICHARD THOMAS WYCHE

ORGANIZER AND PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL  
STORY TELLERS' LEAGUE

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DEDICATED TO THE  
YOUNG PEOPLE  
OF AMERICA





## PREFACE

My first interest in the subject of this little book was awakened years ago when as a sophomore I studied literature in college. It seemed to me then that the stories in the regular course in English literature, as stories if divested of philology and the many critical notes, could be made of primary interest to young people. The idea impressed me so much at the time, that I wrote to both an editor and a publisher confiding in them my idea, but received little encouragement. I dropped the idea until a few years later when I was teaching a little village school. Then I had an opportunity of making an actual test of the stories with the children, and this experience is given in one chapter of this book.

Since then I have told to thousands, children and children of a larger growth, the stories discussed and given in these pages. Some of the material presented here has by my consent appeared elsewhere, but from the first was intended for this publication. The

## PREFACE

story of Sir Gareth was written by Miss E. O. Wiggins and is used here by her kind permission.

RICHARD THOMAS WYCHE.

*New York City,*  
June 25, 1910.

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# SOME GREAT STORIES AND HOW TO TELL THEM

## THE ORIGIN OF STORY TELLING

STORY TELLERS were the first teachers. Before the art of writing or of making books, before even the runes or picture writing, there were story-tellers. Sagamen, scalds, rhapsodists, bards and minstrels by word of mouth handed down through the centuries much of our literature. Unconscious teachers they were, but none the less did they inspire and teach the people as they recited the deeds of their great heroes, such as Siegfried (or Sigurd, as he is termed in the Norse), Ulysses or Beowulf. Before even the day of the Sagamen, somewhere far back in the morning twilight of the world, people began to tell stories.

When the child-race first looked out on the face of nature, saw the sun, moon, and stars; heard the stormwind and thunder; saw the tragedy of nature, the death of summer and the long sleep of winter, what did he think? To him it was pregnant with conscious life—men, monsters or gods, to be obeyed, worshiped or grappled with. This world of out-

## THE ORIGIN OF STORY TELLING

ward phenomena beating in upon him was a great fact, sometimes bringing cold, hunger and death, and at other times warmth, joy and gladness. If the world of outward phenomena was a marvel to the child-race, none the less significant was the discovery of the world of inward phenomena. Where did these hopes, these fears, longings, yearnings, loves and hatreds come from, and what did they all mean? He did not stop to analyze, but in obedience to a universal law spontaneously expressed in some way what he saw and felt.

He had two great facts to deal with, the world of outward objects beating in upon him and the soul and self-consciousness stirring within him. What must he do? In some way give expression to what he saw and felt; he must make the inward outward. He could interpret this outward world only in terms of his inward life. He had life, joy, sorrow, difficulties, death, and when the day was over he would lie down and sleep; therefore the sun must do likewise. When the sun came up from the sea and burned his way through the sky and went down again, to him it was life—conscious life. The sun strangled the serpents of the night; he went forth like a strong man to

## ORIGIN OF STORIES

battle. Sometimes the storm-clouds would vanquish him; then he scattered his enemies, and from a clear sky smiled upon the children of men. Then again he went down in a stream of blood, in the red clouds of sunset; and still again into the calm and perfect peace of a clear sky.

Primitive man herded his flocks, likewise there was an old King, Eolus, who kept the winds at night and turned them loose each morning to blow over the face of the deep. The white cattle of Helios, the sun god, grazing in the pastures, and slain by the men of Ulysses may have been once the white clouds in the blue pastures of heaven. Man rode in a chariot, therefore thunder was Thor riding his chariot over the mountain, while his eyes flashed lightning. In the death of Balder, the beautiful, the god of light, we see the passing of summer from the Norseland, but when Sigurd the radiant one, with a kiss awakened Brunhild from a long sleep, it was but the return of the sun bringing the flowers and birds of spring, awakening the earth from the long sleep of winter. When the red man of America saw the Milky Way, the belt of stars in heaven, he said it was a pathway for the ghosts



## THE ORIGIN OF STORY TELLING

and shadows as they went crowding into another world.

In the Hindoo, Hebrew, Persian, Egyptian, Greek, Norse, German, Celtic, Japanese, and probably all the races whose folk tales and epic stories we have, there are traces of sun myths and stories based on some strong impression made upon primitive man by the outward phenomena of nature. Sometimes he would do battle with the wild beasts, and this would furnish an episode for a story, which would be told and idealized as the years went by. Such may have been at first Grendel, in Beowulf. Then came a tribal hero who led them in battle and gave his life for them, furnishing material for a thrilling story that would be told from generation to generation; and still later came the fairy story with ethical motive.

Some became expert in the recital of stories, and as these tellers of tales sat around the fire-side or under the shade of trees, and looked into the rapt faces of the listeners, the deeds of men, monsters and the phenomena of nature became fused into one and their work grew architectonic, the story taking on artistic form and moving on to a magnificent climax, revealing in the end the ethical order of the world.



## THE KALEVALA

In some such way came the Saga and the Saga-man, the story and the story-teller. Crawford says in the introduction to his translation of the Kalevala, the great Finnish Epic, that it dates back to a time of great antiquity, to a time when the Finns and Hungarians were a united people; in other words, to a time at least three thousand years ago. Although the poem is as voluminous as the Odyssey, it lived all these centuries by oral tradition among the people. It was collected and published for the first time during the last century.

In Rune III of the Kalevala, we have a true picture of the ancient story teller and his work.

“Wainamoinen, ancient minstrel,  
Passed his years in full contentment,  
On the meadows of Wainola,  
On the plains of Kalevala,  
Singing ever wondrous legends,  
Songs of ancient wit and wisdom,  
Chanting one day, then a second,  
Singing in the dusk of evening,  
Singing till the dawn of morning,  
Now the tales of oldtime heroes,  
Tales of ages long forgotten,

## THE ORIGIN OF STORY TELLING

Now the legends of creation,  
Once familiar to the children,  
By our children sung no longer,  
Sung in part by many heroes.  
Far and wide the story traveled,  
Far away men spread the knowledge  
Of the chanting of the hero,  
Of the song of Wainamoinen;  
To the south were heard the echoes,  
All of Northland heard the story."

In the oldest specimen of English poetry that has come down to us, we read of Widsith, the far traveler: "Thus roving, the gleemen wander through the lands of many men as their fate wills; they find ever in the North and in the South some one who understands song." These story tellers, sagamen, skalds, gleemen, rhapsodists, who wandered from land to land telling or singing of some great deed, were welcomed by court and king, as well as by the common people. And sometimes as one passed from one court to another, a chain of gold hung about his neck as a royal gift.

These story tellers, bringing news from the outside world as well as giving the people glimpses of the higher realms of thought with

## VOCAL LITERATURE

which their story dealt, were true teachers and poets. Not surfeited with book-learned lore, they spoke out of their hearts to the hearts of the people. Their names have usually been forgotten, but their work remains in the stories of Ulysses, Siegfried, Beowulf, King Arthur, St. George, The Kalevala and similar stories—a picture of the life of the primitive race, a history of the spiritual development of man in time's morning.

The spoken word has more life than the printed page. Literature was first vocal, and nature's plan has suggested the method for the education of the child to-day, and the stories she used have in turn become the stories for the children of to-day.

## INTEREST IN STORY TELLING TO-DAY

NEARLY all people are interested in the story, the most ancient, universal and popular form of literature. Most people tell stories in some shape or form and are interested in story telling, for it is one of the most natural, entertaining and artistic forms of self-expression. All educators, whether teachers, preachers, writers, kindergartners, children's librarians, playground and Sunday school workers, are interested in the philosophy of story telling, for it is the most universally-used vehicle for moral and spiritual teaching.

All parents and all adults, whether they have children of their own or not, should be interested in telling stories to the young people, for the culture and civilization that our forefathers have given us, we must in turn give to the rising generation about us. When the children come around us and say "Tell me a story," it is our golden opportunity to give them the noblest ideals in the world's literature, the flower and blossom of civilization.

## STORY TELLING TO-DAY

No matter what one's work in the world may be, it is his high privilege to tell stories for entertainment and instruction both to child and adult, by fireside, in camp, in school, and from pulpit, platform and stage. To all who tell stories several fundamental questions will arise: What stories shall I tell? How to tell the story? What use shall I make of the story? In order to answer the question of what stories to tell, one must take a survey of the world's literature, history and life to-day. And on the other hand, he must make a study of the child from the dawn of his interest in the story through all the periods of his development—childhood, adolescence, and maturity.

First, let us view the question from the standpoint of the story—the literature that is most worth knowing. It is not my purpose in this little book to attempt a comprehensive study of literature but simply to point out some of the most important stories as we find them in the great story-books of the world. America has become the melting-pot, not only of the races that come to our shores but of their literature, music, art, stories, folk-songs, games and religions. We have a bewildering wealth to select from. We can not select all of

## · STORY TELLING TO-DAY

the good stories that the various races have brought us. But each race has a national epic, a sacred book or Bible, wherein its life found its highest expression, and like great streams they pour their life into America and the modern world. From Britain, from Northern Europe, Southern Europe, and Western Asia, come four great streams that unite in our American civilization of to-day.

## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL?

THIS is an all-important question. We cannot tell all the good stories, nor read all the good books. If the question—"What shall I read?" is an important one to the average reader, much more important is the question to the teacher—"What stories shall we tell to the young people?" The question is far-reaching and complicated.

What stories do the children like best? Which have the most culture value, which give the most of the race heritage in thought and feeling? What stories have their roots deep in the past and reveal the beginnings of life? What stories have survived the centuries, and like mighty streams bring to us the life of all the past? What stories have become the world's great classics? What stories have the fairy, the supernatural element, and the giants that charm the child; the great hero and high daring, the love of valor, and the love of love that the youth must have?



## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

We must tell stories that suit best the child's need at the various periods of his growth; stories that will correlate best with the other studies; stories that will reveal to the child the glory and beauty of the moral and spiritual order. What stories will do all of this, and, at the same time, voice the teacher's best thought for his pupil, so that when he begins to unfold the story his heart and his mind will be so fired with its message, that he can say with the Great Teacher—"I am come that they might have life."

These are some of the questions that the story-teller must answer. There are some stories that grew in the hearts of people and represent the accumulation of centuries, and are necessarily richer than the average creation of one mind. The *Idyls of the King* and *The May Queen* are by the same author, yet the one grew through the centuries while the other is a 'creation of Tennyson's. To the former class belong the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the *Eddas* and epics—the stories of Ulysses, Siegfried, Beowulf, King Arthur; *The Kalevala*, *Song of Roland*, *St. George*, *The Irish Sagas*, and similar stories.

These stories have been handed down



## PREHISTORIC PERIODS

through the ages and have woven into them the thought of each generation that heard and in turn told afresh the story. Such stories are an epitome of the race life, a picture as it were, of the people in prehistoric periods—their work and warfare, home life and social customs, their songs, folk lore and superstitions; the ideals that inspired them, the heroes that they followed, the gods they worshiped, the truths that they wrought out, their yearnings and prayers, and beliefs in the here and hereafter. They represent the accumulative spirituality of the race, and to such stories must we turn in order to answer the question—“What stories shall we tell?”

All races have their periods of myth, fairy, fable and folk tales. Their literature and history had their beginnings, but as the ages went by there loomed up a great hero around whom revolved many fleeting traditions and folk tales of the race. He towered above all other heroes. Upon him was heaped the ideals and aspirations of the race; he was glorious in form and person; great in prowess, but pure in heart and gentle in spirit; protected by the gods, but subject to pain and sorrow and death. Such characters we find in Siegfried,

## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

Ulysses, King Arthur, Hiawatha and Beowulf.

### SIEGFRIED, A NATIONAL HERO OF GERMAN AND NORSE LITERATURE.

Siegfried had eyes so bright that few could look him in the face; golden locks which fell over shoulders broad as the shoulders of two; great of stature but most duly fashioned. So tall that when he walked through the full-grown rye-fields the dew-shoe of his sword, though seven spans in length, just touched the top of the grain. Well could he wield sword, cast spear, shoot shaft and hold shield, bend bow, back horse, and do all the goodly deeds learned in his youth; fair and winning was he so that all agreed with him when he spoke.

It was he who made the wonderful sword and slew Fafnir, the dragon. It was he who rode the steed, Grani, through fire to waken Brunhild, the sleeping queen, on the mount; married the queenly Kriemhild and waged war for her brothers; cherished malice against no one, sailed dangerous seas in storm and gale. He was so radiant with life that everywhere he went came the springtime; brave, generous, dignified, truthful—an incarnation of the vir-

## SIEGFRIED

tues dear to the Teutonic heart; but overshadowed by fate and at last by treachery, speared to death in the forest, the wild flowers drinking in his blood. Little wonder is it that he is the national hero of Norse and German literature and that he survives to-day in the national songs of the Faroe Islands and folk ballads of Denmark, and that he inspired Wagner to compose immortal operas, and William Morris to write "Sigurd, the Volsung."

He who goes back to those Norse and German sagas, Eddas and epics and reads of the shining halls of Valhalla with its five hundred and forty gates, the green slopes of Gladsheim, of Odin, Balder, Freyja, Thor and the Valkyres; of the giants who formed the world, the Midgard serpent, of Ægir's kingdom at the bottom of the sea; of the twilight of the Gods when the fenris wolf shall eat up the moon and sun, the stars fall and the universe shall be utterly destroyed, gods and all living things; of a new heaven, and of the sea out of which shall arise another earth most lovely and verdant, with pleasant fields where the grain shall grow unsown, and shining Balder shall rule forever; and through it all sees the bright form of Siegfried attended by Odin,

## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

loved and worshiped by men and women—he who reads all this has the setting and the material for a story that will uplift and inspire speaker and audience, and give us the highest and purest that our forefathers bequeathed to their children.

Much preparation is required to tell it successfully. The story is not all in one book, but scattered through many, both Norse and German. The German version of the story may be found in the “Lay of the Nibelungs,” the national epic of Germany. This book, whose author is unknown, was written some time in the twelfth century, and translations of the book into English may be found in many of our libraries.

He who would feel the full effect of the story and catch something of its meaning to the many people who heard it by their firesides in all Norseland, as well as in Germany, must read the old Norse versions, the story of the Nibelungs, the Volsunga Saga, Thridric Saga, and the Elder and Younger Edda. Norse stories have been retold a number of times for both young and old, but few tell the story of Siegfried connectedly—the man and his deeds. James Baldwin has given in “The Story of

## SIEGFRIED

Siegfried," a good introduction to the Hero of the North, while William Morris, who put the Volsunga Saga into English, has idealized the story, told it in his own way in the great English epic, "Sigurd, the Volsung."

If Siegfried is the embodiment of spring-time, as some think, and the waking of Brunhild is the waking of nature from the long sleep of winter, then this is a most appropriate story to develop during the waning of winter and the coming of spring and summer. The story of Siegfried lacks the unity of the Iliad and Odyssey, and for that reason gives the story-teller wider range for the creative imagination. But apart from this it richly rewards us, for it brings us face to face with the faith of our forefathers; introduces us to a literature sublime and beautiful; inspires us afresh with that spirit of purity and freedom that enters into the making of those hardier elements of American manhood and womanhood of to-day. The day is fast coming when we shall cease to emphasize the literature and history of Greece and Rome to the neglect of our own.

Ibsen found in the Norse folk tales much of the material for his plays, while Norse litera-



## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

ture so fired the heart and mind of Richard Wagner that he never rested until he gave us those immortal operas, "The Ring," and made the name of Siegfried and Brunhild household words throughout the musical world. His treatment of the stories revealed their spiritual significance and possibilities from the standpoint of music. Shall we then tell Wagner's stories to our young people? No; not unless we wish to teach the opera instead of the literature. When Wagner wrote the opera he had in mind music, the stage, the footlights and the audience of adult music lovers. The teacher who tells the story has a different viewpoint. He has in mind the youth and his needs; the hardy North races and their literature. His treatment of the story must necessarily be different. Both have their legitimate place, however, for he who has heard the stories can much better appreciate the opera, and likewise he who has heard the opera sees new meaning in the story.

For a literary treatment of the story let us rather turn to William Morris, who, gathering his material from original sources, has breathed upon it a living spirit and personality, creating it anew and adorning it with the

fresh flowers of his fancy; pouring into it his heart and blending all into one harmonious whole, in "Sigurd the Volsung," the one great English epic of the century. But best of all is to get our story from original sources.

## THE STORIES OF BEOWULF AND KING ARTHUR.

In the Old English story of Beowulf, that Teutonic folk epic, we find a story that should be familiar to all English speaking races. Though written about the tenth century in England, its original elements take us back to our Teutonic forefathers in the forest of Europe, and give us a glimpse of their love of the sea, their valor, high daring and national spirit. As a story it has just what the boy likes, the doing of great deeds, unity and directness. Beowulf, the strong central character, goes straight forward to his task, slays the monsters and makes the world better.

When I first felt the fire and inspiration of this story, I told it at length to an audience of boys and girls in a high school.\* The effect was electrical. They had never heard the story and wanted to read it at once, and when in-

\* For my version of the story see page 102.

## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

formed that they could get a cheap edition in modern English, ordered through their teacher a dozen or more copies. They must have been disappointed in the reading, for there is much prelude, palaver, and interlude in the complete story that would not interest the average boy in the first reading. In telling the story I omitted much of this and went straight to the scenes of actions, the three battles. However, were I telling this story to a class as their teacher, meeting them day after day, I would give it in sections, bringing in many interesting incidents in the original story which would be impossible to mention in a brief treatment. In a school in one of our large cities, the children, after hearing Ulysses, King Arthur, Hiawatha, and Beowulf, voted Beowulf to be the best story.

True, this story is lacking in romance, but better for that it is for the boy or girl in the preadolescent period. Why stir the sex element with stories of romance before the child has reached that period? A strong, pure wholesomeness there is about Beowulf, a story it is, from the race when it was young, different from the decadent and effete thought that sometimes comes with age. In Beowulf he



finds the essential for him—action. He despises a character that sits around and does nothing.

But he who tells the story to adult or child, must find something in the story that is vital to his own spirit, else he cannot tell it. To me Beowulf is a history of the inner life and foreshadowed the spirit of the race. Here we find the strenuous life at its source, to slay the monsters of evil and oppression in our land, as well as in the land of others. The spirit to endure, to suffer and grow strong for the right. When we give the child this story, we are feeding him on the mothermilk of the race, fitting him for the world-order, which is one of activity, and frequently self-sacrificing activity. What the monsters were, whether fire, storm or flood, does not concern us here. But true to life's experiences when we fight one battle there is another to fight; when we climb one mountain, there is still another. Life is eternal struggle and aspiration, therefore the story is a moral tonic.

If the object of education is the making of a certain life and spirit, then this story contributes much to that end. From the standpoint of literature we have related the child

## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

to a great masterpiece, the very beginnings of English literature, the first great epic in the language. Heretofore, we have taught the child the heroes of Greece, and Rome, and left him profoundly ignorant of the heroes in his own literature.

### KING ARTHUR

Perhaps there is no better ideal in romantic literature for our boys and girls than the story of King Arthur and his knights, which we find in Sir Thomas Mallory's "Mort D'Arthur," Tennyson's "Idyls of the King," and other sources. King Arthur combines prowess and moral heroism, physical strength and immaculate purity, a man, a king, whose life was dedicated to great ideals which seemed in his day to go down in defeat, but with the passing of time became the ideal of the race.

To the adolescent period, this story with its message of romance and chivalry, is especially appropriate and helpful. A teacher in a high school informs me that the study, dramatization, and an attempt on the part of the children to live again its spirit transform the life of the school, bringing in a reign of kindness and courtesy that had never before been known

## ULYSSES

in her classes. For a further discussion of this story see chapter "Use of the Story."

### GREEK STORIES—ULYSSES

How shall we measure the worth of a story, and what shall be our standard of comparison and our guiding principle? "Some stories stand like central suns in the world's literature," says Frederic Harrison. If we have the sun, we have the moon and the starlight. If we read the great story we have read the smaller, for thousands of lesser stories reflect the light of a greater story. Thousands of smaller books are mere echoes of some master note. Such a story we find in Homer's *Odyssey*. Like a central sun it has shot the beams of its light down through the ages; Virgil reflected it in his story of *Æneas*; Homer's *Shadowland* became Dante's *Purgatory*; Milton was influenced by it; Tennyson in his "*Ulysses*" summed up the story. Painters have told it again and again on canvas, sculptors carved it in stone, poets sung it in verse, while thousands of references are made to it every day in art, in literature and in life. The so-called dark ages have been shot through with the light of this story; and

## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

he who has mastered it and entered into the Homeric world, has the key to much that has been said and sung in modern and mediæval life.

Of all the stories we tell our young people none have such a splendid climax as Ulysses. Siegfried and Roland are killed, Beowulf dies from the dragon's bite, King Arthur is defeated in that "last weird battle in the West," and, like Hiawatha, sails away never to return; but Ulysses returns to his home, rights the wrongs, slays the oppressors, and rules again king and victor. This story coming from the childhood of the world's thought, as it does, should and does interest children when they are quite young. In many instances it is used as a reader in the lower grades. If, as some critics have shown, many of the stories of Homer, such as "Polyphemus," "Circe," "Æolus" and the "Sirens" were folk tales, common both to Asia and Europe, before Homer made them a part of his epic, then we are logical when we break up the epic into its original elements, and give the child, even in the nursery and kindergarten, the "Bag of Winds," "Circe," and other stories.

But that is not the story of Ulysses any more

## ULYSSES

than a dozen blocks of marble is a Greek temple. And well and good it is, for the little child is not ready then for the sustained effort and the great sweep of an epic. If the race in its development made epics out of fairy tales then it is not wrong for the teacher to do likewise, treating each of Homer's fairy stories as a unit in itself, and later bringing them all together in its higher form and purpose.

But will not the student tire of the story by this process? No, Circe and Æolus are now lifted up and glorified and have a deeper meaning. Now the story is Ulysses, ten years at the seige of Troy, and ten years a wanderer and a castaway; Penelope besieged and oppressed by the suitors, true to her husband and waiting his return; Telemachus jeered and mocked by the wicked suitor train, yet going in search of his father. Circe and Æolus are now little islands in a great sea that envelop all. We feel the great tide and under-current sweeping us along and hear ocean waves on some far-off beach. Here we have the high daring, romance and tender sentiment that belong to the ardent years of youth. The little fairy stories of the Sirens and Circe,



## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

which the boy thought he had outgrown as he passed from childhood, now come back to him with an inner significance, and a higher vision as to what it all meant. As Snider has said, "The Odyssey is largely a poem of the sea, and in its transparent depths is mirrored the human soul."

One soon tires of telling a light, trashy story, but not so with a great classic like this. Each time it brings new meaning, new life and inspiration, and the two hundredth time it tells better than the first. It never fails to fire the mind and warm the heart, and as we tell it, it brings to the voice a soulfulness and tenderness so important in telling the story. And we will find in this story something that calls for our highest and best; something as great as Job, Dante, or anything in Shakespeare. To me there is something in the story eternal as the stars, warming like the sun, and as alluring as an unexplored world. No other story do I enjoy telling so much, both to adults and children. It has been simplified scores of times and abbreviated for young people. It is well enough to have these and read them, but we must go back to the Odyssey itself if we would feel the divine fire, and there, at

## FROM HEBREW SOURCES

first hand, get our story and tell it in our own creative way.

### STORIES FROM HEBREW SOURCES.

The day is fast coming when we shall be as free to use the stories from Hebrew sources as we are to use the literature of other nationalities. From the Greeks came our art, from the Anglo-Saxon our free government, and from the Hebrew our religion and morals. The child has as much right to hear the stories of Joseph, Moses, David, Jeremiah, and that supreme flower of the best in Hebrew life, Jesus of Nazareth, as he has to hear the deeds of the so-called heathen gods and heroes. From Palestine have come the ideals that have been the dynamic force in the race, and more than any other entered into our literature and life.

Our young people study the stories of Homer until they can start with Ulysses leaving Ithaca, his home, for the seige of Troy, and follow him through strange countries and climates, over unknown and dangerous seas, until after an absence of twenty years he returns to Penelope and his own sunny Ithaca. With maps, pictures, and their own vivid



## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

imagination, the far-away Grecian world is made very real and beautiful to them. A thousand or two years later Paul, a great traveler and teacher, and a greater hero than Ulysses, sailed over the same sea, was shipwrecked, and for about eighteen years, endured and suffered as much as Ulysses and with a higher purpose; yet few know the story of his life.

The teacher who will start with the early Hebrew heroes, and one after another tell their life story will be giving the child that which will interest him, minister most to his mind, and lay the best foundation for life and its work. Even when we approach the most difficult of all stories to tell, the story of Jesus, if we lay aside all cant and preconceived notions, study the historical and religious conditions out of which the story grew, and then tell it in a direct, sympathetic and graphic way as we would the story of Ulysses or King Arthur, we will find a story that will hold the children. Starting with his birth and boyhood, his home among the poor, his work at the carpenter's bench and then linking in orderly development his deeds; his healing the sick, feeding the multitude, stilling the tempest; his transfiguration, trial, death

## FOLK AND FAIRY TALES

and resurrection, it would make one of the most powerful and tragic stories.

All the charm and supernaturalism of the fairy story are there, while literature and history exhaust themselves to find a greater hero. The master artists of all ages have furnished in the greatest abundance material for illustrating such a story. The historical setting is a well authenticated fact, while the geography of this region is striking and beautiful. Such a story told in a sympathetic and artistic way, free from dogma, would be welcomed by the children throughout the land, and if written in a book would be read and enjoyed as literature. For a further discussion of this subject see chapter "The Story in the Sunday School."

### FOLK AND FAIRY TALES

In the child's estimate the stone that the builders rejected has become the chief of the corner. Many a floating fairy and folk tale that failed to find its way in saga and epic, has, because of its inherent worth lived through the centuries, and is to-day the favorite fire-side story of the younger children. The child's interest in "The Three Bears," "Cinderella," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Beauty

## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

and the Beast," "Santa Claus," and so on, is a better guide to us than the opinion of the overwise adults in determining the literature he shall have. The stories that gave pleasure and inspiration through the ages lived while others were forgotten, and we have to-day the winnowed and selected fairy stories of the world to choose from; but one should know the folk tales of his own land before those of another country. Our children study the geography and history of America before that of India.

The North American Indian and the Negro have furnished us with many charming folk tales. Longfellow has used and idealized many of the Indian traditions in his masterpiece, "The Song of Hiawatha," while Joel Chandler Harris has collected and given to us in his faultless dialect many of the negro stories. The retelling of these traditions are splendid examples to us of the story-teller's art. Longfellow selected his material partially from "Schoolcraft's Collection of Indian Traditions," while Harris gathered his at first-hand from the negroes, and in idealizing these stories, they have written master-pieces that will live forever. Hiawatha, with its sweep of imagination, sustained effort and heroism,

comes properly under the head of an epic, and for charm of meter, outdoor life, spiritual and ethical ideals we have no story superior to it. It was the first story that revealed to me the sweetness and beauty of storyland, when, as their teacher, I looked into the eyes of listening children. For a further study of Hiawatha, see the author's experience as recorded in chapter (Use of the Story).

For humor, relaxation and pure fun we have no better stories than the deeds of "Brer Rabbit" in the Uncle Remus books. These stories, told as they were by a grayheaded, kindhearted old negro to a little boy who came to his cabin fireside every evening after supper, reveal a beautiful picture of a child race, typified in Uncle Remus, speaking to a child of a more mature race. They understood each other, a child looking into the face of a child.

What a unique situation that is: the untaught race becoming the teacher of the educated race. If music, humor, good-natured raillery, skillful blending of animal traits and human nature, as given in the stories that were told every day to the children of the South, meant an educational impress, we must then

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duly consider the work of the black mammies and uncles who told these stories to the children by the fireside, in the fields, and under the shade of the trees.

The negro bringing some of his stories from Africa, getting some from his white master, others from the Indians, and himself creating many on the plantation, has produced a kind of literature that will remain for all time a record of what he thought and felt during his years of servitude in America. An interesting example it is too, of the unconscious making of literature by a primitive race. When we compare the stories of the negro with those of other races we see this difference: the Indian's hero was Hiawatha; the Norseman's was Siegfried; the Greek's was Ulysses; but the Negro's hero was a rabbit. Other races had men and women as characters in their stories but the negro has only animals. His hero is the harmless and helpless rabbit, who outwits the fox, the lion and wolf; not by might or power, but by craft he succeeds. If the hero of a race reveals racial characteristics then the negro's message to the world is not one of prowess, but one of a childlike spirituality as seen in his songs and stories.



The negro's emotional life, his songs, superstitions, stories and beliefs in haunts and ghosts, touching the white child at the most impressionable period, left a lasting impress on the South; for the children of no other section of the country have had such splendid story-tellers and as charming fairy tales told them directly by the race that created its own literature.

And since the Uncle Remus books have been published the folk lore of the negro has reached all parts of America and even into Europe. William Morris puts Uncle Remus down as one of the American books he enjoys. While the stories are universally popular they cannot, because of the dialect, be used for language work with the children though they might be of interest to the philologist. Yet the dialect and the quaint old English expressions bring an atmosphere and a charm which in itself is educational. For pure humor American literature has nothing better nor more popular with the young people after they have passed the kindergarten.

He whose sense of humor has not been developed, who has not been allowed to relax and laugh, is not fit to do school work nor the

## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

world's work. Our boys and girls cannot go all the time keyed up to the deeds of Hercules or St. George. He who has given the child something all day to teach him, needs frequently to give him a story not to teach, but to entertain and rest. When frictions and little misunderstandings arise as they usually do in organized effort, nothing is better for pupil and teacher than to laugh together at the deeds of some such character as Brer Rabbit, the Gingerbread Man, or Little Black Sambo. Thus one's own experiences are made objective, and life is seen in the perspective. An immediate psychic adjustment is made. The atmosphere is brightened, sweetened, and purified, so that all can breathe freely again.

We have more muscles in our face for laughing than for crying. How shall we develop those muscles unless we laugh, and how shall we laugh unless we have something to laugh at? To see the delicate point of humor in a story and to know when to laugh and when not to laugh, means a finer and higher form of mental culture than understanding a rule in mathematics. True humor makes life broader and deeper. It saves one from over-seriousness which is a blight to child-life and a barrier to



## A CHILD'S STORY

progress. One cannot be too much in earnest, but where humor is lacking one is only half in earnest. To the extent that we can relax and let down to that extent we can rebound to higher things.

As an example of a story that is serious to one yet humorous to another I give the following story which a friend recently told me. Among his friends was a little boy named Robert five or six years old. Robert had an aunt that told him stories every night after supper—fairy stories, bear stories, Bible stories, until she reached the end of her repertory. But that night Robert wanted another story as usual and so his aunt said: "Robert, I have told you all the stories I know, suppose you tell me one." Robert straightened up and in a dignified manner said: "Once upon a time a long time ago some children went out in the woods to hunt chestnuts. They went awa-a-a-y back in the woods and awa-a-a-y up on the mountainside. By and by they met an old bear. The bear growled and said: 'Where are you children going?' They replied, their voices trembling, 'To hunt for chestnuts.' The old bear said: 'No, you're not. I am going to eat you up.' About that

## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

time Jonah came along and said to the bear: 'What are you trying to scare those children for? If you do not go away and let those children alone, I'll sic my whale on you!' "

The educational world has not, it seems, until recently realized the importance of humor. That side of the child's life in the school has been too often neglected or suppressed. In this respect the home and Sunday newspapers have recognized more the child's need. The average American mother is probably ahead of the kindergartner in teaching a child to laugh. It is almost as important to teach children to laugh and to give them something to laugh at as to teach them to admire and give them something to admire.

However, humor is a two edged sword and the effective use of it means the understanding of the moods of people and the most delicate and subtle psychic laws. What is humorous to one does not always impress another as such, in fact, it may even offend. But the more we understand each other, the more we approach a common meeting ground. Humor, like good games, socializes and makes democratic. Can we go-to and make humor or is it a by-product of life? If by forethought we can

## THE NEED OF HUMOR

write tragedy, why not humor? He who makes humor for the child must take the child's viewpoint and enter thoroughly into the child's world. Whether it comes as a by-product or by purpose, plan and plot, it must be hearty and sincere.

The humor in the Sunday supplement appeals more to the adult than to the child. The child enjoys the grotesque pictures of men, elephants, dogs and monkeys, and would in any case laugh at such pictures. Members of the International Kindergarten Union realizing that educators have neglected humor in the child's education, are, through its committee on literature, now giving special attention to humor. This much we may deduct from past experiences: humor is so much a part of human life, that if good people do not produce good humor for the children, bad people will produce bad humor for them.

But to return to Uncle Remus, it is rarely that we find stories so pregnant with life as these tales; they interest both young and old. The child enjoys the animal play and talk. Most of the humor is lost on him and for that reason, a simple heroic story is more popular with him. But the adult sees in the artistic

## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

settings, the prelude and postlude, the dialect, the humor and human life, something extremely interesting and amusing. Measured by some standards, these flowers of the soil may seem common and unworthy, but those who feel the fellowship of all literary art, and those who heard them in their childhood, can see with Wordsworth, in the meanest flower that blooms, thoughts too deep for tears. Others have crossed the seas, and climbed the heights of some Mount Olympus to find literature, but Joel Chandler Harris found his in the common life on the plantation; and he has written a piece of literature that will live. As Theodore Roosevelt says of him, "Presidents may come and presidents may go, but Uncle Remus stays put."

With the passing of the primitive races and the coming of the printing press, folk tales have had a tendency to die out, yet each community has some tradition or story, a lost colony, a Catholic mission, that can be used for education. An example of this is seen in the story of Johnny Appleseed, a traveler, fiddler and story-teller, who starting in Ohio went before the advanced guard of civilization, planting apple seeds, so that the immi-

## FROM HISTORY AND LIFE

grant found apple trees all ready growing when he cleared the patch for his new home in the West. So deep an impression did this character make that several towns in the middle West claimed the home of Johnny Appleseed, and in one place a monument has been erected to his memory.

If, as Froebel has said, story-telling is a refreshing spirit bath, then the fairy story is the most popular bath with a little child. But to attempt to give him all the fairy stories now published, English, German, Japanese and Russian, would be worse than not giving him any. Some one has defined a fairy story as a heavenly story with an earthly meaning, and in this all good fairy stories are one. He who fails to feel this truth cannot tell or read a fairy story to a child, though he have all the books published; but, he who realizes this truth, has a key to them all, and though his supply may be limited, yet he himself becomes a doorway through which the children pass into a land of green pastures and still waters.

### STORIES FROM HISTORY AND LIFE

I once heard Miss Elizabeth Harrison at a twilight meeting out of doors, tell a short story



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from the life of St. Francis of Assisi, that monk whose heart so overflowed with love that he went out and preached to the birds and trees and called them his brothers. The speaker standing on the slope of a hill, under the edge of a tree whose limbs moved softly to the summer breeze was herself well-nigh invisible against the sky, illumined only by one or two stars, yet she made me see most vividly a picture of St. Francis and his work; a picture, too, that I like to recall again and again, for it brings me peace and pleasure.

On another occasion, I heard Doctor Edwin E. Sparks in one of his historical lectures tell a story of George Washington and his inauguration as the first President of the United States. The inaugural exercises were held in New York city, and he described the journey of Washington and the crowd that greeted him as his carriage passed through Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey; the hall in New York in which the exercises were held; the dress the people wore; the appearance of Washington, the father of his country, as he took the sacred and solemn oath to be its first president. The whole story made a powerful appeal to my imagination and emotion, bring-

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ing Washington so near that I felt as if I knew him personally.

On still another occasion, I heard an exiled colonel of the Russian army tell a story of his arrest, imprisonment, and banishment to Siberia; how he escaped from Siberia through Manchuria, Japan, and finally to the United States. For nearly two hours and a half he held a large audience breathless with his story. The first half of it dealt so much with the injustice of his arrest, the separation from wife and children, the inhumanities of his treatment, and his life in Siberia that the horror of it all made us sick at heart; but then this sufferer was a man of faith, prayer and hope, and as the story proceeded, we saw the exile would escape; that the good somehow was victorious over the forces of evil, and before the story had closed, things stood out in a new perspective. There was compensation for the sufferer; he was glorified by it, and the whole story became a great masterpiece of art that ministered to our emotions and æsthetic tastes. A parallel it was to Ulysses in the *Odyssey* revealing his identity and telling in the halls of Alcinous, king of the Phæacians, the story of his hardships and wanderings.



## WHAT STORIES SHALL WE TELL

Next to literature, history is the greatest story book in the world, and the source from which the best stories have been drawn. Yet, when many of us look back to our childhood days in school, the waging of wars, the number of men killed in battle, the signing of treaties, dates and the naming in order all the presidents was emphasized more than the life story of the heroes who made these dates significant.

But can one take some prosy yet important character in history and make an interesting story? Yes and no. If one should go back to original sources and by his imagination and dramatic power assimilate and recreate the time in which the character lived, yes, decidedly. History is dry kindling wood, the story teller must furnish the spark which makes it flame and glow. To one void of imagination, the richest material in history would be but a valley of dry bones; but he whose imagination pierces the shell of appearance gets at the inner significance of things, and he can breathe on the valley of bones and they will arise and become living people. A thousand years will seem but as yesterday.

Before telling historical stories, let us turn to the ancient bard and minstrel, sagaman and

## THE SAGAMAN

scald and see how they told their stories; Study the great classic models and there get our measurements, see how these masters told a story, which was both their history and literature. Let us study the best writers of to-day, but remember that the style of the novelist is not the style for the oral telling of a story to young people. The novelist had in view his problem, his book, and his audience; but we who tell stories orally have an entirely different situation to deal with. In telling a story to young people, and usually to grown people, we should tell it directly and avoid involved plots and long descriptions. The child craves action, for

“To him one crowded hour of glorious life  
Is worth an age without a name.”

The lives of many prominent historical people—pioneers, reformers, explorers, hunters, empire builders; such as King Alfred, Columbus, Captain John Smith, Daniel Boone, Washington, Wesley and Luther, are at heart heroic, epic, poetic, and lend themselves easily to the story teller's art, which can be true both of itself and history.

## USE OF THE STORY—AN EXPERIMENT

ONCE upon a time the writer undertook to teach a little school in a far-off seacoast town in the South. The little village was on a sandy bluff overlooking the sound and the sea. Cut off from the main land by an impossible swamp in the rear, yet shut out from the great Atlantic by an ever-shifting sand bar that lay for leagues along the sea coast, it gave the little town an ideal harbor of shallow water, the home of fishermen and oystermen whose cottages were scattered for miles along the sea coast.

Being isolated, the inhabitants were compelled to rely upon themselves and in doing this had developed a solidarity of community life and a manhood and womanhood of purity and simplicity that was as refreshing as the breezes that ever swept its shores.

Amid such surroundings I began to teach, and it was one of my early experiences. Not

## A COUNTRY SCHOOL

having libraries or lectures to help me, I too must depend on self.

I had never studied pedagogy and knew nothing of teaching except that which I had seen in the university lecture rooms. The teacher who preceded me "heard" lessons and the children "said" lessons. That seemed an easy proposition, for the questions were in the book and the children could memorize and say the answers.

But I soon discovered that the children found no interest in the fact that one word was a verb and another a noun. They memorized the rules and repeated the lessons, but they were not at all interested in the subject. They were bored by this mechanical process, and so was the teacher. Something must be done. One day I told the class the story of "Hiawatha's Fishing." Every child listened with rapt attention. I had found something that they were interested in. I requested the children to write the story out for their lessons the next day. The majority of them did so, and read the story as they had understood and written it down. One little fellow said, "I ain't got no pencil,"—which meant that he didn't write it. "Tell it then," I said. He told it in such a

## HIAWATHA

vivid and realistic way that the class applauded. I had found something that the child liked. The second day I told the story of "Hiawatha's Fasting," then "Hiawatha's friends," and so on, two stories a week, until we had told the whole story of Hiawatha.

But you ask "What did that have to do with grammar?" From the story we got the nouns and verbs we studied and the sentences that the advanced classes analyzed and studied. (The whole school heard the story, it being an ungraded school with classes ranging from primary to high school.)

What else did we do with the story? Let us see. When the children told the story orally or on paper it was creative work, and better for expression than memorizing "Mary had a little lamb." The child received a mental picture. He heard the story, and re-telling it in his own words he created afresh the picture, thereby becoming a creator and an artist himself. In reciting "Mary had a little lamb" he was dealing with words. In telling the story he was dealing with mental images.

One day I saw the children playing out on the campus, and on making inquiries they said, "We are playing Hiawatha and Mondamin

## HIAWATHA

and Old Nokomis." They were dramatizing the story. It was taking effect. Had I been a trained teacher I would have let them do it in class as a part of their work. Twice a week we got the words for our spelling lesson from the story. The children were so much interested in Hiawatha that they wanted to make pictures of Hiawatha. Then I let them illustrate the story, writing in their composition books the story and illustrating it. As we studied geography the upper Mississippi Valley and the Lake Regions all took on new meaning because Hiawatha had once lived, toiled, and suffered there.

But what had I done for those children most of all? I had fed their souls,—given them a masterpiece of literature. Starting with the childhood of Hiawatha we had followed him and admired him. We had roamed through that fairy land of dark green forest; heard the whispering pines, saw Hiawatha when he caught the King of Fishers, "Slew the Pearl Feather," prayed and fasted for his people, punished "Pau-puk-kee-wis," wooed and won Minnehaha, and when his task was done, sailed away into the fiery sunset.

That something inexpressibly sweet and



## USE OF THE STORY—AN EXPERIMENT

beautiful that I felt in the vision hour, and longed to impart to the children and heretofore had not been able to, I had at last found incarnate in a hero, while the music, meter, and imagery of poetry had awakened the sense of the beautiful and revealed a new world to the children. New life had come into the school. It had been born again and born from above.

Two months had passed. I had made an experiment. It had succeeded. Grammar, language, composition, spelling, drawing, story telling had been taught by that method. Formal language had become linked to literature and thereby to life. The formal had become an expression of the spiritual.

Where could I find another such story? The little goody-goody sissy-prissy stories could not interest us. They all seemed tame in comparison to the sustained effort of a story like *Hiawatha*. I had discovered that the children could fully appreciate a great story told to them in a living, creative way, and that interest grew each day as we told the long story in sections to the end. The only other hero in literature that I knew in these first years of my experience in teaching was revealed in the story of King Arthur which I had recently



studied in a university; but, were the Idyls of the King suited to the children? That was the only source of the story available to me at that time and it was more modern, more complicated in every way, and far more difficult to tell than the one we had just finished.

After hearing a number of the Hiawatha stories the children could and did read Longfellow's versions, but not so with the Idyls of the King. While the children fully enjoyed the stories of the Idyl, the style of Tennyson was not suited nor intended for children. All the imagery, heroic deeds and idealism of Hiawatha were there, but in telling this story much must be omitted. Involved plots must be made direct, and the story simplified. This required much more preparation on the part of the teacher, but we must have another story. It would not do to let the school fall back into the dead rut of lesson hearing, and though I feared they could not appreciate the Arthurian story yet I would try. I began with the finding of a naked babe on the beach, the childhood of Arthur, Merlin's work, the sword Excalibur, and Arthur's coronation.

At first the children were not so much interested. Their minds were still on Hiawatha

## USE OF THE STORY—AN EXPERIMENT

and his deeds; they were loath to leave him. But gradually as I told of Arthur and his deeds, Gareth and Lynette, Geraint and Enid, Lancelot and Elaine, the Quest of the Holy Grail, The Flight of Guinevere, the Passing of Arthur, the interest grew, and at times became intense, especially among the larger boys and girls. The story was coming home to them. King Arthur was a man like ourselves, of our own race. The whole story had brought the children face to face with a great ideal, Arthur, the blameless man. Pure himself, he demanded it in his knights, and bound them by vows of obedience to their conscience and their king. He defended the weak against the wicked; broke up the robbers' dens and cleansed the land; led his knights in brave deeds, for it is said that when the fire of God filled him none could stand against him in battle. He enjoyed the athletic sports and the tourneys, yet was so gentle, they said his ways were sweet.

As with Hiawatha the story was reproduced, illustrated, correlated with English history and geography, and at the same time it furnished the most excellent material for ethical and æsthetic culture. After the last story was told,

## SPIRITUAL MEANING

the Passing of Arthur, and the children saw with Sir Bedivere, the King pass with the three tall queens in a barge over the sea, they stood in wonder gazing on the splendor of his passing. Defeated in the last weird battle in the West, yet he was victorious in his ideals for he became spiritual king of his race.

“From the great deep to the great deep he goes,” the children heard but did not quite understand. It was the better for that because it awakened in the child something of the mystery of life and death. In that it served the highest purpose. It helped the child to realize that there are things in life that eye has not seen nor ear heard. Let it not be forgotten that while we use these great stories for formal work, the formal was always the result of the creative. “The letter killeth; the spirit giveth life.” Thus it was that children and teacher left the low plains of the “lesson hearer” and hand in hand walked the upland pastures of the soul.

This is not offered as a model method for teaching, but to reveal the source of the author’s inspiration. The great interest of the children in the story, and a vision of its possibilities for education and culture, led me to

## USE OF THE STORY—AN EXPERIMENT

make a further study of the subject which, at that time, received little attention by the schools. That was some years ago and were I to teach again such a school, I would not and could not use exactly the same methods to-day. The underlying principle, however, that I stumbled on at that time, is still true, but I should apply it differently.

For one thing I do not think I should teach technical grammar to children until they had reached the philosophic period. Then I would make it a pure science. I would give them much of the best story literature, both orally and in printed form. And perhaps I would speak of the grade as a story grade rather than a grammar grade, and say story school instead of grammar school. I would encourage and teach them to motive the story in all legitimate ways, such as dramatization, re-telling, illustrating, singing, clay-modeling, in wood, metal and in their daily intercourse with one another and in the world outside of the school.

## THE RE-TELLING OF STORIES, AND THEIR USE IN FORMAL WORK

THE formal must be an expression of the spiritual else it is not art. This is true whether the idea is expressed in words, wood or iron. To do formal work whether it be oral re-telling, composition, illustrating or dramatization of a story apart from the spirit is deadening to the child. The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life is true in language and literature as well as in religion. Herein is a great possibility for the development of individuality—letting the child's life develop after the laws of its nature and not after arbitrary laws forced upon him from above. This is the pivotal point in all our work.

No poet, painter, sculptor, builder, musician, writer, or worker of any kind has ever done abiding work who did it apart from the spirit. It is a child's nature to sing, play, build, dance or reproduce in some way that which impresses him. Impressions must be expressed in order

## THE RE-TELLING OF STORIES

to become a part of us. If the deeds of Siegfried, King Alfred or George Washington impressed the child he will tell about the hero that he admires. Here the wise teacher finds a psychological basis for his formal work. The interest the child has in the deeds of his hero will tide him over the otherwise drudgery of spelling, composition and language forms. The heroic spirit of the hero has become his and he is not afraid of the task.

Furthermore, the love he has for the hero makes the story he tells, writes, or the picture he makes of him a sacred task. He must do justice to the ideal hero. The teacher who, telling a story, has not gotten so near to the hero that he feels the sacredness of his life, has not reached the heart of his story. There is no pattern process or method by which this may be done. Day after day as he tells the life story of a great hero, he will catch something of the spirit of the man.

To retell a story is not to reproduce the language word for word, just as it was first told, but to re-create it from your viewpoint. When the child tells a story therefore, do not stop him and say, "You did not mention so and so," breaking in upon the mental picture-



## RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

making process and confusing the child with non-essential facts, such as pronunciation, incorrect grammar and the like. Nothing could be more deleterious and destructive to the creative spirit. Put yourself in the child's place. Could you tell a story if, in your presence, there were a superior to criticise your words and pronunciation?

No. Let the child have the floor. It is his audience. He is responsible for their attention. Stand with head uncovered in the presence of this child-artist and orator. Through the story he is giving back to you the world as he sees it and understands it, creating it anew and telling what it means to him. When you told the story to him it was your message to him; now it is his message to you and to the class. Gradually, as he tells and reproduces the stories, the artistic sense grows upon him,—unity, essential points, climax and ending. Naturally as the child gives back his story he will leave out some points originally in the story; they are not essential to his purpose; he is giving his interpretation, enlarging upon others and actually bringing in new points not originally in the story, but essential to his viewpoint.

## THE RE-TELLING OF STORIES

The teacher who with rude hands stops a child and says, "That is not the way it is in the book or the way I have told it," makes of the child an imitator and not a creator; thwarts at the very outset one of the greatest educational advantages of story reproduction. We do not want to make the child tell a story as the teacher would tell it, but in his own way, thereby giving to his work individuality. He is a separate ego, and through his personality is giving a new revelation of the divine. Day by day he hears the teacher and the children of his class tell stories he will get standards of comparison by which he may measure his own work and improve it. Correct grammar and pronunciation? Yes, but not here.

The speaker, preacher or orator makes mistakes, but he would despise you, and the audience would be disgusted, if you stopped him in his speech to correct grammar. His message and the atmosphere he brings are the essentials. All else should be forgotten for the time. So it should be with the child before the class. He is the orator to reveal to you and the class the world as he sees it. For the time being, sit at his feet and help him create the atmosphere necessary for the telling of the story.

## FROM WITHIN

Art comes from within, not from without. Do not force; do not fuss; be quiet; wait for the child to hear the still, small voice from within. At first he may be timid; it is an untried world for him. He has, it is true, caught glimpses of story land, seen its beauty and felt its enchantment, but others were leading him. Now, he must lead others. As he tries he discovers that he and story land are somehow very near to each other. As he spreads the wings of his imagination, to his delight, he can fly like Peter Pan, leap and run in this story land. And soon he will be in the wigwam with Hiawatha, sailing the high seas with Ulysses or slaying the dragon with Siegfried. Such work comes both to child and teacher like a benediction. And the teacher remembers and sees new meaning in the words of the Hebrew prophet, "And a little child shall lead them."

## THE STORY IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

THE attention that Sunday school organizations have very recently given story telling indicate the influence of modern psychology and pedagogy on the church. The methods of our Sunday schools have not in the past been conducive to a skillful telling of Bible stories. The sermonette method of teaching prevailed. That produced some who were good at telling stories to illustrate the subject of the lesson, but that is a different thing from telling the Bible story itself. The Bible is one of our greatest story books. Why then have we used it in the Sunday School more for dogmatic and sectarian purposes than for its stories? When we look at the question historically, what we have done seems quite natural.

During the Middle Ages men were not allowed to think for themselves on religious subjects. With the Protestant Reformation the individual found freedom to think, but with this freedom came persecution. However, the joy

## THE CATECHISM

of this new-found freedom of thought was worth the price of persecution. This new world that had been discovered must be located, mapped and its boundaries set. To do this, to state just what they believed, led into theology and theological controversies.

When our forefathers grappled with these theological problems and made dogmatic statements as to their faith, such as we find in most of our catechisms, they had in mind the church and theological controversies, and not the child and his needs. The truth that they had suffered and died for was contained in the catechisms, their articles of faith, therefore he who committed to memory the catechism had the truth. But in that reasoning they made a fatal mistake. To make children memorize these dogmatic statements expecting them to grow religiously or morally thereby, would be like feeding them on bone meal, expecting therefrom an increase in the bony tissue of the body. The lime that the body needs is there, but not in an assimilative form. Nor is there truth for the child in dry-bone statements of religion. If the child asks for bread will you give him a stone? That is what we do when we make him memorize theological statements, both the

## THE STORY IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

language and thought of which are beyond him.

The writer recalls two teachers and two methods of religious instruction in his childhood. One who taught him the catechism and one who told him Bible stories. The catechism bored and wearied him, and so far as he can see to-day was time wasted, while the stories charmed and uplifted, and remain to-day a pleasant memory. This is not arguing that the child should not memorize some things. There are many selections from Scripture and other sources that he can memorize both with great pleasure and profit to himself.

“The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want,  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,  
He leadeth me beside the still waters,”

is full of beautiful imagery that appeals to the child. But theological definitions of sin, justification and the like, have neither feeling nor imagery and make no appeal whatsoever to the child. The child is interested in the deeds of men and not in their doctrines. Tell him connectedly the life-story of Moses, Buddha, Jesus, St. Augustine, Luther or



## BIBLE STORIES

Wesley, and you have given him the spirit and life of the great religious leaders and the institutions which grew out of their work. No catechism can do that. Gladly he would hear the life-story of a great religious hero and teacher, but his doctrines do not interest him now. Give him the life-story now and when he has reached later the philosophic period, he will himself raise the theological and philosophical questions, and knowing the lives of the great religious leaders he will have the historical background whereon to build his faith.

Anyone can take a catechism and have a class memorize and repeat the answers; but it takes a teacher with a larger and deeper preparation to so read the Bible that he can tell in a creative and interesting way the story of its great heroes. That is what we must do if we base our methods on true psychology. The child will not listen nor be interested in the doctrines and theology of St. Paul, but if one should tell the story of Paul, of his travels over sea and land, how he crossed plains and mountains, spoke to great crowds, encountered mobs, stood before emperor and king, wrote books, was loved and worshiped by the people, was shipwrecked, endured and suffered and in the end

## THE STORY IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

became one of the great heroes of history, he would listen attentively to the very close of his story. The child craves action, heroism, high-daring; a hero is necessary to his life, and as Dr. Mabie says, necessary to the world of adults as well.

And the story should be studied too, connectedly to the close and not by piecemeal, beginning as some have done with one character and before the life-story is done dropping it and skipping to another in order to conform to a certain doctrinal theme which may interest the adult but not the child. That method may account for the fact that Bible heroes have not always been as popular with children as some others. If the story of Ulysses and Hiawatha were taught in a similar way they would lose much of their charm and interest to the child.

The day school in its literature courses is giving incidentally to the child, a comparative course in religion, greatly to the advantage of the Sunday school worker. In Hiawatha we have an Indian Messiah who worshiped the Great Spirit, prayed and fasted for his people. In the Norse we have the worship of Odin, and Balder, the God of Light, Gladsheim and the

## A COMPARATIVE VIEW

life beyond the grave. In the Greek we have the gods in their relations to man, the upper and lower world, immortality, rewards and punishments. St. George was a protector of the faith, while King Arthur had heaped upon him the attributes of a deity until his life-story reminds one of the Christ-story. Our young people see incidentally in these stories as well as in all good literature that all people are religious and that it is a perfectly natural thing to be religious, and they would unconsciously reach the conclusion that a man without religion is an exception and unnatural.

The heroism and prowess in these stories, however, is the main point of interest to the child but none the less does the religious life of the race come out; and to have religion associated with physical strength and prowess as well as moral heroism rather than physical weakness is an advantage. And none the less are we giving him the great truths that are common to all religions, making him tolerant and charitable, and teaching him that religion is as broad as life itself, and that it is natural for every human heart to go in quest of the Eternal. With this broad outlook we can then

## THE STORY IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

better help our young people interpret the old truths in terms of modern thought and contribute much toward that larger religious life and thought which must inevitably come.

## STORY TELLING IN THE LIBRARY

WITHIN the past decade the public libraries have instituted story telling as a means of interesting the children in the best books of the library. It is the function of the library to supply the people with the best books. But the young people do not know the best books unless these books are advertised or in some way made known to them. A story well told from a book has proved the most effective way of leading the children to read a book. By telling stories from certain books in the library the library may affect the literary taste of a whole community.

Books are in the library for use and the librarian who gives the books the largest and most intelligent circulation accomplishes the purposes of the library. I know of an instance where a librarian in the children's department not only greatly increased the circulation of the best books among the children but her story-telling gift and enthusiasm reached the

## STORY TELLING IN THE LIBRARY

supervisor of primary work of the public schools and in that way the whole school system. This is the testimony of the superintendent of public schools in one of our large cities.

As the school and public library differ in their work so it would naturally follow that there would be in each a different use of story telling. The school must teach language, geography, history, ethics and other subjects while the library has one purpose, that of bringing the best books to adult and child. To most effectively carry out this work for the young people then the story that is told, how it is told must all be conducive to the purpose in view, that of giving the children an intelligent idea and love for that piece of literature found in the pages of a book.

However, this use of the story as a library tool recognizes the larger background of the library and its educational purposes. Miss Olcott of the Carnegie Library, Pittsburg, the prime mover and leader in this work, calls attention to the by-products of the story hour in her paper at the Child Conference for Research and Welfare, Clark University. She says, "Besides guiding his reading, a carefully prepared, well-told story enriches a child's



## CHARACTER BUILDING

imagination, stocks his mind with poetic images and literary allusions, develops his power of concentration, helps the unfolding of his ideas of right and wrong, and develops his sympathetic feelings; all of which 'by-products' have a powerful influence on character. Thus the library story hour, becomes, if properly utilized, an educational force as well as a literary guide."

## STORY TELLING ON THE PLAYGROUND

THE playground offers in several respects ideal conditions for story telling. When children have romped in joyous and wholesome play they have gotten rid of pent-up energy, are relaxed, refreshed and in a receptive mood for a story. And a story can be told with the simple purpose of giving pleasure. It might be told out of doors, in some sections, a good part of the year if there were no disturbing noises near. The stories might be sung and dramatized on the lawn bringing together in a psychic way the game and story. The interest that children have in games, like that in stories, is vital and elemental.

Good games socialize, promote physical health, organic strength, alertness, energy, giving to life zest and pleasure. When this is combined with the refining and spiritualizing influence of literature—story, legend and romance, we are fitting the child for association and coöperation with people. If education is

## PLAYGROUND MOVEMENT

giving a certain spirit and life rather than mere book knowledge then games and stories have a most important place. Life and spirit accomplish more in the world than formal knowledge especially when that knowledge is gotten at the expense of the body. Those who take the initiative in life are those who have abounding vitality.

The playground movement in America, though comparatively new, has already accomplished much both for children and adults in making us remember that we must live joyously and happily, else we cannot work. It still remains, however, for someone to show us how best to combine games and stories on the playground. It would be interesting if some of our educators would take a group of children, give them the best games and stories daily with a very brief period devoted to books, and after several years compare them as to strength, knowledge, spirit and efficiency with a group of children who had only book education.

## STORIES IN THE HOME AND SOCIAL CIRCLE

It does not matter whether we are teachers, kindergartners, librarians, playground or Sunday school workers, every adult owes to the rising generation of children something of the culture that has been given to him by the generation gone before. The "Tell me a story" on the part of the child is his cry for spiritual food, and to hear stories from the great story books of the world is, Dr. G. Stanley Hall says, "One of the most inalienable rights of children." There is no better place in all the world for telling a story than in the home, that institution which is greater and more important than all other institutions combined.

It is possible for one to so use a fund of anecdote and story in home and social circles as to have a decided therapeutic effect on mind and body, driving away despondency and bringing sunshine. It is in the home that we come into the sweetest and divinest relations with children and with one another. It is here

## SPIRITUAL TIES

that we find the best conditions for a play of those subtle and delicate psychic influences which enter into story telling, making it both a perfect art and an inspiration to a noble and beautiful character. There are many homes that cannot afford libraries and the rich adornments of art, but no home is so humble that parents cannot gather the children around the fireside on a winter's evening or about the doorsteps in the twilight of a summer's day and tell them stories. A simple fireside is a greater stimulant to the creative imagination than the wealth of a palace.

To enter thus into the child's world and into the joyous companionship of children is one of the highest privileges of parent and teacher. He who fails in this does not form the deepest and most lasting ties with the child. He also robs himself of one of the greatest sources of perennial youth.

## STORY TELLING IN THE KINDERGARTEN

IN the grades the child is occupied with reading and writing, the mastering of form, the book and desk—things that for the moment deaden rather than inspire, but are means to things of primary interest to him. In the Kindergarten the child goes at once to the things that he is fundamentally interested in, play, story, song, gifts and occupations. In the grade so much time is put on form and learning to *read* the story that the pleasure and inspiration of the story itself is given a secondary place.

In the kindergarten the story is given orally every day and is to the child a moving picture, talking picture, drama, literature, history, and ethics. The child learns to listen to a story and is dependent on the story-teller. The plan of Froebel from the first in the Kindergarten, with its social atmosphere and the children sitting in a circle, is far more conducive to story telling than the plan of the school with



## A PROBLEM

its bench and book. For these reasons kindergartners have been pioneers in story telling, leaders and inspirers of others, and to-day as a class are doing more story telling than other educators.

In the grades, however, there seems to be more unanimity as to the literature the child shall have than in the kindergarten. In the kindergarten period the child is in a transition from nursery rhymes and Mother Goose to the fairy and heroic stories, neither in the one nor exactly in the other. Some kindergartners take the position that the stories in this period should deal with familiar subjects, such as, mother, brother, sister, cat and dog.

This principle of going from the known to the unknown is true, but in the first five years of the child's life he has had these things until they are old to him. He has learned more in these five years than he will in any other corresponding period, and is ready for something else—a wonder world that lies beyond the every day life. And besides have not the nursery rhymes given him a glimpse of a fairy land? Little Red Riding Hood and the Three Bears are the Illiad and the Odyssey of many children before they enter the kindergarten.

## STORIES IN THE KINDERGARTEN

These stories do not seem likely to be displaced in the child's interest by those more modern. There seems to be no reason why a kindergartner with a creative imagination can not make new stories from familiar objects, give them with the classic fairy story and then let the children have an opportunity to express their preferences.

The world is full of fairy stories; we cannot tell a hundreth part of the good ones. When we survey the world's literature and study its growth and larger aspects we find that floating fairy stories, told by the race in its infancy found their place in some of the world's masterpieces; that these stories were units in themselves before they became a part of an epic, and can be broken up into their original elements and told as such with no reference whatsoever at the time to their larger setting in epic and romance; for example, Æolus and the bag of winds and Circe from the Odyssey, or Sleeping Beauty from the Siegfried story, with the advantage that the story teller has in her heart and mind the larger background and atmosphere of the masterpiece which ministers to her emotions, giving her motive for telling the story. And with the still

## “TELL IT AGAIN”

further advantage that the child will find the same fairy story in later years in some masterpiece, meeting again an old friend in a larger and richer world. Finally, whatever story we tell, whether from life or from literature, must so minister to our emotions that we can tell it with soul and enthusiasm, making it such good literature and art that the children will want to hear it again. For a further study of stories in this period see chapter on Folk and Fairy stories.

## STORY TELLING IN LEAGUES AND CLUBS

DURING the past few years some who are interested in story telling have organized themselves into leagues and clubs for the study and telling of stories. Seven summers ago at the Summer School of the South, Knoxville, Tennessee, there were gathered more than two thousand teachers representing almost all phases of educational work and from all sections of the country. From among this gathering a few frequently met at twilight on the lawn and told stories. The meetings had a serious purpose, yet were free and informal. The stories we told represented almost all phases of literature from folk and fairy tales to the epic, and were interspersed with the singing of national airs and melodies. Sunday evenings, there being no exercises in the summer school, more time was given to the meeting and Biblical stories replaced the folk tales. Superintendent B. C. Gregory, of Chelsea, Massachusetts in describing those meet-

## ORIGIN OF THE LEAGUE

ings later, says: "The fading twilight, the dreamy quiet of the hour, the overshadowing trees, the circle of faces, the repressed tone of voice of the story tellers appealed wonderfully to me. And the child, the being to whom these services were dedicated, was always in mind. When the darkness had fallen so that the form of the story teller was all but invisible, the effect was heightened. We always adjourned quietly, as if we feared the gentle influence would vanish, if we were noisy."

When the school was drawing to a close, we felt that this idea could be utilized at home; our meeting had grown from an attendance of several dozen to several hundred and at our last meeting, we organized ourselves into a Story Tellers' League which afterwards became the National League. A formal organization was effected and without knowing just what we were going to do, but feeling that there was great possibility in the idea, we launched the movement; and in the language of a poet: "Spread every sail and made for the mid seas, hoping to discover lands, not laid down in any chart."

This so far as I know was the first formal organization of a Story Tellers' League in

## STORY TELLING IN LEAGUES

America. It was the beginning of the Story Tellers' League movement which since that time has spread until it reaches nearly all sections of the country and represents something like fifty local leagues, all with one fundamental purpose, that of discovering in the world's literature, history, and life, the best stories and telling them to and for the young people, with love and sympathy. It seeks to bring together in story circles those who love to hear and tell a good story, educators, teachers, parents, kindergartners, Sunday school workers, children's librarians, playground workers and all whose hearts are afire with this work that they may impart its spirit to others.

The league at Memphis, Tennessee, several years ago issued a year book, and since that time has issued a similar book, giving in advance the topics and story tellers for the whole year. The first year the members studied and told Persian, Egyptian, Greek, Italian, Russian, Japanese, German, English, Bible, fairy, folk and history stories. The meetings were held every other Saturday morning at eleven o'clock in a room offered by the public library. The programme for a meeting consisted of: first, a talk or paper giving a



## PRACTICAL RESULTS

survey of the topic in hand, the setting and sources of the story, and then a number of stories were told in a creative way by those appointed for that meeting several months or a year in advance.

The subjects for this league were so arranged that appropriate stories came just in advance of Thanksgiving, Christmas, Washington's Birthday, Easter and other holidays. This made the work practical for the teachers in the league and as one told me, she now enjoys telling stories to the children, but before the league was organized she was afraid to do so for fear of adverse criticism. She now sees that the story is one of the greatest means toward a child's education and one, too, that brings her into delightful companionship with her children. The membership of this league is composed not only of teachers but parents, Sunday school workers and people from other walks of life.

The president of this league is the assistant superintendent of the public schools; but in another city of similar size the president of the league is a dentist of the city, and among its active members are an editor of one of the leading daily papers, a pastor of one of

## STORY TELLING IN LEAGUES

the largest city churches, college students, teachers, and church workers. This league also meets in the public library, helps in the story hour for the children, and its influence has resulted in the formation of several other leagues in the city. In a similar manner the work is done in other cities reaching from New York to Seattle, and from Chicago to San Antonio.

Five of these leagues issue year booklets giving in advance the topics and stories for the year. The small towns as well as the large cities have successful leagues. In New York City the league has two divisions, each division meeting at separate places. Their programmes have been from October to May as follows: South Division, October—Norse Myths; November—Stories from Beowulf, Tinker's translation; December—Stories of Siegfried, from Morris' Sigurd the Volsung; January—Stories of Arthur, from Mallory; February—Legends of Charlemagne from Church; March—Stories of Roland; April—Irish Folk Tales; May—German Folk Tales. North Division has for its topics, Pathos, Love, Adventure, Humor, drawing its stories from all sources and giving a more popular programme. Still another

## GIVES INSPIRATION

league in this city has a membership of men and women few of which are engaged in educational work; but they find great relaxation, rest and inspiration in telling stories at their meetings.

Those who organize leagues must have some formal organization. Machinery cannot create life; yet machinery can aid immensely in directing life. This is its formative period and its possibilities are yet to be fathomed.

The originators of this movement thought at first only of telling stories to children, but one interesting development has been that of junior leagues among the children, when under the supervision of some teacher or tactful adult. Children like to have an organization of their own, and while not all of them like equally to tell a story, there are enough of them to make such an organization in a grade or class interesting and helpful.

I have in mind a girl that is now a student in the high school, who five years ago caught the creative spirit of story telling in a junior league and became so popular as a story teller that children would flock to her home to hear her tell stories. Later, she was given a class of little children in a Sunday school and as

## STORY TELLING IN LEAGUES

a result the class became the most popular in the school. She is now telling the Arthurian and Bible stories with the same abandon and freedom that she acquired in the beginning with the fairy stories, and this experience has helped to make her life a radiant one.

## THE STORY AND THE FUNDAMENTAL NEEDS OF THE CHILD

THE kind of a story we tell, when and where we tell it and the use we make of it all must in the last analysis be determined on the basis of the elemental needs of the child in the different periods of his development. Literature exists for man and not man for literature. The literature that ministers most to children and to their development into manhood and womanhood is the best literature for them. Therefore some knowledge of child life is absolutely essential in order to strike a balance between literary requirements on one hand and the fundamental needs of the child on the other.

It is not intended here to make an exhaustive study of child growth but to indicate briefly what all who deal with children can observe in the laboratory of human life. The primary interests that a child may have in a

## THE STORY AND THE CHILD'S NEEDS

story is a guide to the story teller. For primary interest is nature's way of leading the child to the things that he needs. When interest is shown it means that there is something in the story that is vital to the child; that his imagination assimilates in some way the truth which becomes a part of his soul life.

Sometimes a story intended for adults may catch the interest of the child on some mere fringe of the story, while the main content is beyond him and lies clear outside of the child's world. A superficial observer might therefore be misled by such interest. When we tell a story to the child we wish to meet most perfectly the requirements of literature and the biological, sociological, ethnological and spiritual needs of the child.

As we have considered in the foregoing chapters of this book some of the literary requirements of the story let us now briefly consider the question from the standpoint of the child and his needs. When the child first shows interest in the story, we find him in a Poetic Period, and he is interested in the Mother Goose jingles and rhymes of:



## MOTHER GOOSE

“Hi! diddle, diddle  
The cat and the fiddle  
The cow jumped over the moon.”

To him the sky rests on the treetops; he reaches up to take the moon in his hands. Santa Claus and fairies are of supreme importance to him; dolls and toys walk and talk and visit one another. The poet Wordsworth describes this period in his Ode:

“There was a time when meadow, grove and  
stream,  
The earth and every common sight  
To me did seem  
Appareled in celestial light.”

The child is in that period of life parallel to the time when man and woman lived in a garden and knew not good from evil; when Jehovah walked in the garden in the cool of the day; when the gods played on the green, walked and talked with men.

But as the child grows, he discovers that the sky did not rest on the treetops, and he has found out who Santa Claus is. He has outgrown his little world and has been driven

## THE STORY AND THE CHILD'S NEEDS

from his Eden. When you tell him a story he asks if it is true. He is skeptical. He is an iconoclast and smashes his toys. He is interested in real horses, hunting, fishing, adventure and exploration. Nature is pushing him out of childhood into a larger world. As its wonder bursts upon him he is restless to explore those untried regions, climb its mountains, sail its seas and clear its forests.

Dr. G. Stanley Hall says in his great book on Adolescence, that in this period the child revels in savagery, is reckless, dislikes books; reason, morality and religion are slightly developed, but his bodily vigor is highest, and he craves to revive the ancestral experiences. These being denied him, he vicariously repeats them through stories of high daring. Heroic tales, the slaying of monsters and giants, and history stories are his choice at this period. The account of Beowulf slaying Grendel, Ulysses putting out the eye of Polyphemus or David killing Goliath, fills him with delight. This period ranges from eight to twelve and might be termed the Heroic Period.

But before the child is scarcely conscious of it, he is approaching another period. A strange new world is looming up; great

## ADOLESCENT PERIOD

changes are taking place both in his body and mind. Roughness gives way to romance and sentiment. Sex differentiation appears; love awakens. There are yet higher heights for him to climb. He is interested in stories of romance and chivalry, but as he continues in this adolescent period the great interest in stories is on the decline. The yearning for companionship and love that the young people have as they pass through this period is the voice of nature calling them to go forward and realize their manhood and womanhood, and like a goad driving them on to take their place in society.

George Albert Coe, in his "Education in Religion and Morals," divides the adolescent period, which ranges from about twelve to twenty-four, into sub-periods, and points out the characteristic of each period. The middle period from sixteen to eighteen because of mental and bodily conditions and the increased emotional capacity is, more than any other period, associated with a religious awakening or what is frequently termed conversion. Bullock \* calls attention to the fact that girls in the High School prefer stories of great women rather

\* Report of National Educational Association, 1897.

## THE STORY AND THE CHILD'S NEEDS

than of great men. It is true, there are many more stories of heroes than of heroines written for our young people, and it would seem that we discriminate in favor of the men. However, in the classic stories so universally used in our schools we find associated with the men the lives of women like Penelope, Guinevere, Kreimhild, Brunhild, Enid and Minnehaha; but still there should be more stories of great women especially for the girls in this period.

The Poetic and Heroic Periods might likewise be subdivided and the process continued till we reach the characteristics of the individual. However, no exact limit can be fixed for the beginning and ending of each period; they shade into one another. Geographical and racial conditions make wide divergences and even under like circumstances one period overlaps another. Something of each period remains and is recapitulated, appearing each time in a higher form. Dr. Stanley Hall says that we find in the soul and body of man fragments and echoes of all the ages gone before.

He who would make a correct diagnosis, and come near to the heart of the boy and girl, must take all of these facts into consideration.

## THE STORY AND THE CHILD'S NEEDS

It would enable him to touch the fundamental thing in the child's life and make his story telling both a science and an art, and himself an evangel of good to the world.

## HOW TO TELL A STORY—PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

WHAT are the fundamental psychological principles of telling a tale? Or, in other words, what preparation of heart and mind must we make in order that we may tell a story effectively? In the first place we must be able to visualize, to see clearly the images, the mental pictures in the story. If we are to tell the story of Ulysses we must see him as he says farewell to his wife Penelope, and sails away from sunny Ithaca with an army to the great contest on the plains of Troy; see him as he builds the wooden horse and takes the city; see him as his twenty ships are caught in a storm and swept out of their course; see him as he escapes from the giant Polyphemus; see him as he wanders over a great unknown sea and lands on strange islands; see him as he escapes from the enchantment of Circe and the Sirens; see him when he lost all of his ships and men, and reaches the land of the Phæacians where he tells, in the shadowy halls of



## STORY FROM HOMER

the King Alcinous, the story of his wanderings, his sorrow and suffering; see him when at last, after an absence of twenty years, he returns to sunny Ithaca and finds his home in possession of a wicked suitor train; see him as he enters his home in the guise of an old beggar, finds Penelope his queen still true to him, though hard pressed by the suitor train; see him when at the last moment he throws off the disguise, and puts down the wicked suitor train and is recognized and received by the queen and people.

To the extent that the story teller can imagine these scenes, creating them anew as he tells the story, to that extent can he make his audience see them. He may rest assured if he does not see clearly the mental pictures, his audience will not. If the picture is hazy and dim in his mind his words will be doubtful, inaccurate, and inartistic, but if he have a vivid mental picture his words will be graphic, and his use of them will give just the right shade and color, making the outward ring true to the inward. Therein is the difference in reciting a story and telling a story.

To read or recite usually means memorizing and recalling the words. The usual school

## HOW TO TELL A STORY

recitation is simply this and nothing more. If the reader forgets the word he is lost, stage-frightened; but if he is telling a story and is dealing with a mental picture, creating it anew in his own mind and giving that forth, a different mental process is taking place. Having a mental picture, he is free to pick up a word here and a phrase there and build again the picture. If he forgets a word there stands the picture, another word will do; he has five smooth stones with which to kill the giant instead of one. As he tells the story he is thrown back upon himself; his judgment and taste in the use of words is called into play. The outward is an expression of the inward, and as the story takes shape, the story teller becomes a creator and an artist. That is a higher work than reciting the words in a book, though memorizing and reciting has its legitimate place in education, and an important place, too. In order, then, to tell a story we must see clearly.

Imagination and feeling are two essential elements in literature. He who tells a story must deal with these as he would with an intimate friend. He who sees the imaginary in Ulysses much more must enter into the feeling

## RETURN OF ULYSSES

of the story. He must feel that heroism and self-sacrifice that entered into Ulysses as he said farewell to Penelope and his people, and with hopes sailed away to Troy to rescue Helen the stolen queen. He must feel his sorrow and disappointment when his ships were swept out of their course and he became a wanderer over the face of the deep; feel the loneliness that came to him when he had lost all and was shipwrecked and cast upon an island; hear his prayer to Pallas Athene for help; his yearning for wife and child and friends; at the other end of the story enter into the grief of Penelope as she, hard-pressed by the lawless suitor train, waited year after year, for the return of her husband; feel all this,—feel the tragedy of it, and, with the return of Ulysses hear the shout of joy and victory, as he puts down evil and brings peace. He who does not feel the story has little motive for telling it. The purpose of the story is usually to impart feeling and to awaken feeling. Then he who would tell a story effectively must feel it, and feel it deeply.

What effect has feeling on the speaker? To feel the thrill of a great story causes deep breathing and chest expansion, and that is im-

## HOW TO TELL A STORY

portant to the speaker. One who is moved by emotion usually has grace and charm of manner. Lovers are always graceful. He whose heart has been touched by the message of a great story will, as he begins to tell it to others, creating afresh its feeling, find in his voice a soulfulness and tenderness that cannot be had by vocal training. The voice rings true to the inward feeling. This does not imply that vocal gymnastics have no place in speaking. Voice culture has a place and an important place in all speaking. The story teller may rest assured that if he does not feel his words, his audience will not. To assume by voice and manner that he does feel, when in reality he does not, is artificial, injurious, and to continue to speak words that cease to voice your thought and feeling will be the undoing of the story teller.

The great stories whose growth represents the accumulative feeling of a race are well-nigh inexhaustible. To master these stories means a continual study of historical and geographical conditions out of which they grew. Therefore, he who goes back to the primal sources of the great myths and epics, and follows them through the centuries as poet, writer, musician

## SEE CLEARLY. FEEL DEEPLY

and teacher have told them afresh to each generation, has linked himself with much of the world's emotion as literature has preserved it.

To touch the feeling of the child is the main purpose of literature. The teacher who does not educate the feelings of the child is not fitting him for a world in which feeling plays so prominent a part. The music of a tender, sympathetic voice awakens the soul in the child, creates an atmosphere in which a soul can grow. The soulless speaker has a soulless voice. The psychological processes underlying expression are one and the same, whether it be telling a story, singing a song, building a house or writing a book. One must see clearly and feel deeply before he can express himself in abiding and artistic form.

But the mental processes of expression are more than seeing and feeling. One must will. He who would tell a story successfully must take the bit in his teeth; believe in himself, will that his audience see with him the mental pictures, and feel with him the truth of the story.

If the audience sees with you and feels with you, where is the place for will? Seeing, feeling and willing should, and do, go hand in hand

## HOW TO TELL A STORY

from the first. He who wills, and wills powerfully, has a background of calm repose and self-possession that gives dignity and beauty to his work. The audience responds at once to his master touch. They recognize in him a leader, and are not afraid to follow him in unexplored regions, or sail with him the high seas of the creative imagination, yea more than that, will lend to him their spirit, establishing telepathic relations, and, as he unfolds the story, create with him the world anew in truth and beauty. As he succeeds in this it brings to him abandon, a freedom and a joyousness like the spirit of children at play.



## HOW TO TELL A STORY—SPIRITUAL EQUIPMENT

THE ability to see clearly a mental picture and create it anew means visualizing, reflection, meditation, purpose, plan, plot. No one ever built a great house, wrote a book, cultivated a farm or built an empire but what back of it was a mental picture,—an ideal. Castles must be built in the air before they are built in stone. The ability to see clearly an ideal is the measure of one's strength in the world. He who sees vaguely is a weakling, while he who sets before him a great ideal and sees it clearly is a tower of strength. Some men have seen clearly a low ideal, live for self and are to-day forgotten. Others have set before them ideals that reached out across the centuries and are to-day immortal and have become teachers and inspirers of millions. King Arthur, in that "last weird battle of the West," seemed to go down in defeat, but there was something so high and noble in his ideal that the people would not let him die, but by fireside told of

## SPIRITUAL EQUIPMENT

his life in story and legend until he became enshrined in art and literature. The defeated king has become the spiritual king of the race, and profoundly influences us to-day.

As a story ministers to the emotions, giving one a desire to talk about it or tell it, or motive it in life, so outside of the story in the larger world, feeling is the dynamic force behind all deeds. Love paints the pictures, writes the poems, sings the songs, bears the burdens and does all the great and abiding deeds.

When we are using our imagination and emotion in telling a story, we are using the same forces that underlie all creative work. The telling of a story is not something different and apart from the other work we do but a part of the universal order. He who is obedient to the highest ideals that come to him, and wills to follow his highest and best feelings, has gone back to the fundamentals. He has gone back of all art, all literature, all music, all creeds, and stands face to face with the Father—the eternal creator. He holds communion with the unseen and eternal. Thus he is baptized with the spirit and the words he speaks are spirit and life. He becomes conscious of his kinship to the

## SOUL LIFE

divine and his oneness to all that is high, good and beautiful in literature and life. This will bring to the speaker a culture that cannot come from books. It will give his thoughts and words a purity and sweetness that will put his work on a higher plane. He who communes with the All-father, will, when he communes with his fellow-men have a message for them. A deep and abiding soul life is more important than the mouthing of many words. The measure of our influence is not what we say but what we are.

Supremely important as one's spiritual equipment is for speaking, good bodily health adds to it a hundred fold. Mind and heart cannot do their work well tenanted in a neglected body. Spiritual equipment comes from putting oneself in harmony with all that is highest and holiest. It means opening all the avenues that lead to the soul: human friendship and love, the laughter of children at play, art, music, literature, the still, small voice within, the freeing of one's soul from evil; sorrow, disappointment, defeat, and victory; the stretch of prairie and ocean shore, the crowded street, the pathless wood, the song of the thrush at twilight.

## SPIRITUAL EQUIPMENT

Those who teach our young people literature and history may be confronted with this danger: in order to rightly interpret the literature and the history of the far-off past, one must enter into that world and yield so much to its enchantment as to lose touch with the modern world and its claims. The worship of Odin and Zeus was sufficient for the child race, but the race in its manhood has outgrown it. What boots it to know that the Divine revealed himself in the past if we cannot find him now? In new forms must we find the everliving spirit and the eternal verities of life. The spirit of expectancy is the creative spirit. We must all be seers. Standing somewhere out in the sunlight of the future is the perfect man, the ideal for which we aspire.

He who does not look to the future, cannot be a leader. "Where there is no vision the people perish." It is through the creative imagination that we perceive the ideal and come into consciousness of our kinship to the divine. It is this spirit that will sweeten, interpret and purify all the literature of the past. The past then means infinitely more because it is a part of one great revelation whose beginning we have, but whose glorious development is known

## CRÉATIVE WORK

only to those who labor and love. To be a partaker in this divine process, and to be conscious of it, is a source of infinite comfort and peace. If to faithful and loving children, teacher and parent reveal something of their plans, so that they may work to a common end, will not the divine teacher reveal to us something of his plans? With this faith and spirit, cannot the teacher write and tell stories that have never been heard before, becoming a teacher not only to her pupils but to the world?

## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

A LONG time ago there lived on the north-western shores of Europe a race of people called the Danes. It was a very, very long time ago that Hrothgar was king and ruled over these Danish people. He had ruled long and well and his people loved him. He was wealthy and built for them in one of his chief cities a great feasting hall. It was named Heorot because of the hart horns that were ranged around the eaves of the building. It was gilded within and without, while its horns and towers reached up to the blue air. It had long been the burning desire of Hrothgar to build for his people this great hall, and when it was completed it was grander than the children of men had ever seen or heard of before.

It was in this palatial hall that the king spread great banquets for the people, giving them rings and many presents while Wealtheow, his beautiful queen, sat by his side. It was a joyous meeting of the people. The



## GRENDEL

dulcet note of the harp and the clear-voiced singer were heard. Sometimes one skilled in song and story would chant the story of creation; tell how God Almighty made the earth and spread out the sea, set the sun and moon in the sky and decked the earth with tree and flower. When the entertainment was over the people would say good night and go home and sleep the better for having met each other in this pleasant way.

All went well for awhile; but suddenly a scourge came upon the land. Some distance from Heorot in the swamps and fenlands lived a grim monster by the name of Grendel. (He was a descendent of Cain and bore the curse of the Creator. In form he was more of a monster than a man). All night he would prowl about the land doing deeds of mischief, but at dawn would hie away to his lair at the bottom of a dismal lake.

One night he passed in sight of Heorot hall, saw the light and heard the joyous sounds of the assembled Danes. This made him jealous of the king because the people lived in peace and happiness. When the sounds of mirth had ceased and all the people had retired for the night, Grendel came up to the door of Heorot,

## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

broke it down, seized thirty of the Danemen who were sleeping on the floor and bore them away to his lair. A few nights after that the monster came again and carried away more men in hellish glee, and ate them up.

The people were in great trouble. The king and his men were on guard for Grendel, but, like an evil spirit, he came and went; they could never see him. For twelve years he came until the houses were empty and the land desolate. The people in their distress prayed to their wooden idols for help, but none came. The king never sat in council but that he planned with his men to rid the land of the accursed monster; but all to no purpose.

Now in the Geatland, a day's journey across the water, lived Beowulf, a nephew of Hygelac, king of the Geats. Of all the heroes then living Beowulf was the strongest, tallest and noblest. News reached him of the evil deeds of Grendel. He determined to go to the aid of Hrothgar and slay the evil monster. He ordered a ship prepared for the voyage. He called for volunteers to go with him on the perilous journey. Fourteen of his bravest young warrior friends said: "We will go." So, one day, with their swords and shields and

## THE VOYAGE

spears they stepped into Beowulf's curved-neck boat, spread out the white sails, and over the wave ways they went.

Before the close of day they saw in the distance the cliffs and shining shores of the Dane-land. Soon the keel of their boat grated on the sand bar, and stepping out they walked upon the shore. But no sooner had they put foot on land than a man on horse came galloping up and, waving his sword in air, said "Who are you, mail-covered warriors?" He was a coast guard stationed there to keep out enemies and spies. "We," replied Beowulf, "are from Geatland, and have come to see Hrothgar, king of the Danes. We come as friends and have an important message for the king." The guard was pleased with Beowulf's words and admired his tall form. He let him pass, and to make amends for his rough words led the way. With clanking arms they walked along the pebbly pathway, and soon came in sight of the shining towers of Heorot hall.

They marched up in front of the hall, and stacked their lances. A messenger came out and met them. Soon they were standing in the presence of the king. When Beowulf's name was announced the king said to him: "Yes,

## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

yes, I knew your father.” When Beowulf told Hrothgar that he had come to grapple with Grendel the old king was delighted. It touched his heart that someone had come to help him in his grief and old age against the terrible monster.

The king called the people together. A great banquet was spread in Heorot in honor of the visitors. Beowulf and his men were introduced to the people and given royal welcome. There were singing, mead drinking and music. Glee ran high. The merry-making lasted until a late hour in the night. Then the king thought it time to retire, and so he said to Beowulf: “Grendel often comes to this hall at night. He may come to-night.”

Then said Beowulf: “I would like nothing better than to stay here and fight him.”

“Not to anyone else have I ever entrusted this hall,” replied the king. “My men have always guarded it, but I will let you and your men keep it to-night. If Grendel comes you can try your strength, and may God Almighty help you!”

“If I die,” said Beowulf, “send my armor to Hygelac, my uncle.”

Then the people arose and passed out. The

king said good night and went out into the darkness. Beowulf and his men were left alone in charge of the great hall.

Then Beowulf said to his men: "Lie down and sleep as do the Danemen. I shall grapple with Grendel single-handed. I hear that he laughs at armor, will not fight with armor, neither will I. God will decide between us."

His men spread themselves upon the floor. Beowulf stripped himself of his war gear, placed his ample shield against the wall, mounted upon a couch and lay down. At first his men tried to keep awake. They did not know that they would ever see daylight again, but tired out from their long journey they soon fell asleep.

But Beowulf did not sleep. He lay there listening for Grendel. It was nearing dawn before he heard the monster's heavy tread around the doorway. A moment later he heard him seize the door and break the iron fastening. As he came in he smashed the passageway and then walked upon the floor of the wide hall. From his eyes shot out a pale light that lit up the gilded hall. He saw the men lying about sleeping, and laughed to himself that he would devour them and no one to molest.



## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

He seized one man, bit his throat and ate him up. Then turning he saw Beowulf lying near by, and reaching out he laid his clawy hand upon him. But Beowulf sprang up, seized him by the arm and shoulder and held him with a powerful grip. Grendel tried to shake him loose, but could not, for Beowulf had the hand-grip of thirty men and held him like a vice. Grendel ran against the benches and tore them loose from the floor. The walls of the building shook, but still Beowulf held him fast. The monster bellowed, the bone and sinews snapped, his arms came loose from the socket. Then he fled to the joyless wood, spilling blood on the ground. Beowulf then walked to the end of the hall and hung the monster's hand and arm upon a nail in the gable end.

Soon the news spread through the land and the people came in crowds to view the horrible hand with claws like iron spikes. The king had another great banquet spread in honor of Beowulf. He thanked and praised him and gave him many presents,—jewels, swords, shields, and eight beautiful war steeds with gilded bridles and saddles. The queen thanked Beowulf and said:



## GRENDEL'S MOTHER

“Thou hast brought it to pass that far and near  
Forever and ever earth men shall honor thee,  
Even so widely as ocean surroundeth  
The blustering bluffs.”

The people applauded. It was a late hour when they retired for the night, but while they were sleeping another monster came.

Grendel had a mother, a devil-shaped, wolfish woman, and when her son came home sore wounded she swore vengeance on the Danes. That night she got up from her lair at the bottom of the lake, went through the woods until she came to Heorot hall, broke the door down and entered the hall. Only a few men were left there to guard it. Beowulf, not expecting any more trouble, was sleeping in a room apart. The monster fell upon Aeschere, killed him, seized the hand and arm of her son and then fled to the fen-lands.

The next morning at dawn someone ran to the king, woke him up, and said: “Another monster has come, the arm and hand are gone, Aeschere is dead.” Then the gray-haired old king broke out into fresh grief. Aeschere, his long trusted hero in battle and dearest friend

## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

was dead, and another monster was in the land. Quickly they sent for Beowulf. It was still in the dusk of the morning when he walked into Hrothgar's chamber. The king in a word told him what had happened.

Then Beowulf said: "Grieve not, oh, wise one! Let us go quick and track the monster to his lair though it cost us our lives. It is better to avenge our friends by doing something than by needless wailings for them. It is a glorious thing to die at last, fighting for one's friends. I promise thee that the monster shall not escape me. Be patient. There is hope." Then up sprang the old king, and thanking the Almighty for Beowulf's words, called for his war horse.

Soon Hrothgar and Beowulf, armed and on horseback, were leading their men in search of the monster. For a long time they followed his tracks in wood-paths, over bottoms and high cliffs and through narrow passages, until coming out of the dark wood they suddenly found themselves standing on a cliff overlooking a lake. A desolate looking place it was, too, surrounded with world-old trees, their roots in the water, making a hiding-place for nickers. The lake was so deep that no one had ever

## A DANGEROUS DIVE

found a bottom, and its waters so poisonous that a deer chased by the hounds rather than go into the water would fall down upon the shore and die. Its waters were dark with blood. There on the cliff in a pool of blood lay the head of Aeschere. Beowulf seized his horn and blew a terrible war blast. Dragons, serpents, and great worm-like sea beasts were lying around the shore basking in the sunshine, but when they heard Beowulf's horn they disappeared beneath the water.

Then Beowulf said: "This is where the monsters live. I am going to dive to the bottom and bring back the hand and arm," and he began to get ready for the perilous undertaking. About his body he buckled his hand-woven corslet, over his head he pulled the shining helmet. Unferth, one of Hrothgar's men, gave him Hurunting, a short trusty sword, that had stood the test of many a battle. Then he was ready for the dangerous dive. Turning to Hrothgar he said: "If I never come back be a father to my men, and send my presents home to my uncle, Hygelac, king of the Geats." Without waiting for a reply he leaped from the cliff and disappeared in the lake. For a moment the water bubbled and

## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

boiled and then it was smooth. Beowulf was gone. Away down, deeper, and deeper he went a long time.

The devil-shaped merewoman was looking for him, it seems. For no sooner had he touched the bottom than she shot out from her roof, seized him in her claws, and before Beowulf knew what had happened was speeding along through the water with him in her grip. Soon she had him under the roof of her den, a place lit up with a pallid light. There they grappled and had a terrible tussle. Beowulf drew Hurunting and struck with all his might, but it failed him. The blade could not pierce the monster's scaly hide. Angered by this, Beowulf seized her by the shoulder. They grappled and fell to the earth. Before he could rise she seized him and sat upon his body, drew a knife and would have stabbed him to the heart, but the corslet would not let the blade pass through. In a moment Beowulf's strength came back to him. He wrenched himself loose from the monster and stood up, and as he did, there, hanging on the walls just by him, was a great sword made by giants in ancient days before the flood to fight against eternal God. None but giants could wield the sword. Beowulf

## BEOWULF'S VICTORY

seized it, and with one mighty stroke cut off the merewoman's head.

Further back in the hall Beowulf found the huge body of Grendel. He was dead, and beside him lay the arm and hand. "I will show the Danes something more than the arm and shoulder," he said, and raising the great sword cut off Grendel's head. And lo! the blood was so poisonous that the blade began to melt like an icicle in the fire. Then taking the head of Grendel in one hand and the sword hilt in the other he made his way upward through the water.

A long time the hero's friends waited on the shore for his return. Clear until noon they waited, but still he did not come back. By and by they saw blood boiling up in the water. "He is dead," said Hrothgar. "The monster has slain him. Let us go," and they separated. But Beowulf's men could not bear the thought of leaving their lord, and so they remained on the shore waiting and watching. As evening shadows gathered about them, all seemed so lonely and desolate in this strange place that at times they grew soul-sick and sorrowful. But Beowulf had never yet failed, and how could he now? At last they saw a moving of



## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

the mere, a boiling up in the lake, and up from the water came their hero, dripping. In one hand he held the head of Grendel, in the other the sword hilt. One unbuckled his shield, while another his helmet and there stood their liege-lord none the worse for his dangerous adventure.

On a spear they hung the head of Grendel. It was so heavy that it took four men to carry it. Through the woods they marched and soon came in sight of the high hall, glittering in the last rays of the setting sun. When the Danemen saw the horrible head they stood with their mouths and eyes wide open, wondering. Beowulf soon told the king of the fight and made him a present of the sword hilt with which he slew the monster. The hilt was a curiosity. It was wreathed with writhing serpents of gold, while engraved in runes was a history of the sword—how and when it was made by giants in ancient days.

Then Hrothgar thanked and praised Beowulf, while all the people listened. “Good friend Beowulf,” he said, “you have rid our land of the accursed monsters, and become world-famous. Do not let this make you proud. For half a century I ruled the Danes,



## RETURN HOME

brought them together and made them one people so strong that no enemy on earth dare molest us. Then I built for them that wonderful feasting hall with towers reaching to the sky. We were happy, joy filled the land. But after joy came grief. Grendel came and devastated the land. But now, thanks be to God, I am permitted to look upon his gory head."

Another banquet was spread in honor of Beowulf and more presents given him. But Beowulf, worn out with the work of the day, soon retired.

With the song of the first birds the next morning Beowulf was up and ready to start for home. Not until he and his men were equipped and ready to start did he approach the dais on which Hrothgar was sitting and bid him farewell. The old king was moved to tears as he put his arm about the young hero's neck and said good-by. "Thou art strong and wise beyond thy years, dear Beowulf, and I predict that some day the Geats will make thee king."

Then, with a happy heart Beowulf and his men marched across the meadows to where his boat was riding at anchor. The coast guard rode up and greeted them with words of welcome. Beowulf presented him a handsome

## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

sword in parting. The presents had been sent down in advance, and the boat was already loaded with horses, armor and jewels. The tall mast was in place. The white sails were spread out, and away sped the boat over the sounding sea.

The journey homeward did not seem long to Beowulf. Soon the familiar headlands and cliffs of the Geatland hove in sight. The coast-warden, who had long been anxiously waiting the return of Beowulf's ship, came down to the water's edge, greeted him and helped him bind his ship strong and fast so that storms could not take it out to sea. Soon Beowulf was in the hall of King Hygelac, his uncle, telling him the story of his trip and his adventure with Grendel.

The king and people listened spell-bound to the story. When Beowulf had finished his story he had the presents brought in and divided amongst his friends and people. Of the horses only two he kept, the others he gave away. Hygelac was delighted with the report that Beowulf made, and in return praised and honored him. From this time on Beowulf steadily grew in favor with the king and people. When a boy he was not thought

## REFUSED THE CROWN

much of, being modest and quiet in his ways. He was looked upon as slack and unpromising, but now all had changed. His heroic and unselfish spirit made friends for him everywhere. The king gave him his father's gold-mounted battle sword, wide acres, a fine mansion, and a seat in the council next to the king. Thus it is that the heroic and unselfish are rewarded.

Soon thereafter King Hygelac died and the crown was offered to Beowulf, but he said: "No, let the boy prince Heardred, Hygelac's young son, be made king, and I will fight his battles for him." But some years after that the young prince fell in battle and then they put the crown to Beowulf's head. For fifty years he ruled the people, kindly and well, but he was not permitted to close his reign in peace.

On a high bluff overlooking the sea in the Geatland there was a stone castle or stronghold where once lived a band of brave warriors. They had for a long time collected rich treasures of gold, silver, rings, bracelets, and drinking-cups; daggers, swords, and armor of all kinds. A long time these old men lived there and guarded this rich treasure, until finally, one by one, death claimed them, all save one lone man. Then, one day, he saw that he

## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

too, must soon pass away, and so he took all the wealth of jewels and buried them in a roomy cave in the side of a mountain. Over the grave he said: "Hold thou, O earth, the wealth of mighty heroes who can not guard it longer; swords, shields, and mighty armor rest together. No more will be heard the feet of horses on the gravel, nor sound of harp in hall, nor swoop of falcon's wing." Soon thereafter he died.

Then the castle was forsaken. But a terrible dragon made the cave near by his home, and for three hundred years guarded and gloated over the treasures that he had found there. A hidden pathway led up to the mouth of the cave, but few knew about the path, and those who did avoided it as we would a gruesome horror.

But one day a slave fleeing from his master went into the cave. He stumbled upon a jeweled tankard and saw the great pile of jewels. The noise awoke the sleeping dragon. The man, terror-stricken, fled but took with him the jeweled tankard. He somehow felt that in taking the cup he might bring trouble upon the land. But it was too beautiful to lose, and then, too, he would take it to his mas-

## THE DRAGON

ter and in that way make friends again. When the dragon discovered that his treasures had been robbed he was enraged. He came out in search of the man and smelt his tracks on the rocks, but the man had made good his escape. Back into the cave he went to make sure that his treasures had been disturbed, then out again around the cave and out into the desert places, gleaming and wild, but no enemy could be found. Hardly could the dragon wait for night to come when he would pay for the jeweled cup with fire. Forth from the cave he flew, spitting fire and smoke, burning farms, houses and fields all over the land, but when daylight came he would hie back to his den. Finally Beowulf's home was burned, that beautiful mansion, the gift of King Hygelac.

When the news reached Beowulf he was horrified. At first he was inclined to complain against Providence, which was not his habit, and feared that God Almighty was punishing him for some sin. His mind went back to the days of his youth, when he grappled with Grendel. Then he was young and strong, but now he was old and gray, and felt that his earth-days were numbered. But still this new danger to his realm must be dealt with, and he



## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

must go forth and face danger as of old. He ordered made an iron-covered shield. He called about him twelve men, one of whom was the man that discovered the dragon's den, to act as guide.

In addition to the twelve men the king's army was to go into encampment near the dragon's den, but not to take part in the fight. Then in the direction of the fire-dragon's den they moved. When they came near the place the guide very reluctantly went ahead, showing the way. Beowulf sat down upon the headlands and talked about the past. Somehow he felt that this would be his last battle. Then buckling about him his coat of mail and taking his iron-covered shield and sword, said to his companions: "Wait here, God will decide between us."

Then approaching the mouth of the cave, he shouted to the dragon, who heard his challenge resounding through the cave, and forth from the stone arch he came, sending out steam and making a horrible noise. Beowulf raised his shield. The winged fireworm charged upon him, spitting flame and smoke. Beowulf drew his sword and struck with all his might, but the sword could not pierce the monster's scaly



## BEOWULF'S LAST BATTLE

nide. Beowulf's men watched the conflict for awhile. The sight was frightful. Instead of going to his aid, they, like cowards, fled, all save one, a prince's son though they were. Wiglaff, the youngest, and a cousin of Beowulf, ran to the king's aid, and shouting to him words of courage, closed in upon the monster. In a moment his wooden shield was burned, then he fought under Beowulf's shield. This enraged the dragon so that drawing off a pace he made a rush upon his enemies, and with his teeth seized Beowulf by the neck. But Beowulf drew his knife, and as the monster reared upon him struck him in the middle. The knife pierced a fatal spot. The monster relaxed his hold and fell back, gasping and dying.

But Beowulf had fought his last battle, the dragon's teeth had poisoned his blood and he knew that the wound would prove fatal. "I have ruled my people for fifty winters," he said, "and I can rejoice in a well spent life. Though I am dying, I have joy in the fact that I lived well and protected my people from enemies, and they can not charge me with evil deeds."

Then he said to Wiglaff: "Go quickly and bring from the cave the dragon's treasures, that

## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

I may see them before I die.” Wiglaff went within the cave and brought out in the sunlight the bright jewels, gold, cups, arm-bracelets and helmets, old and rusting. Beowulf saw them and rejoiced, but the light in his eyes was fading. “I can wait here no longer,” he said, “I have fought my last battle. When I am dead burn my body and build a monument to me by the sea.” Then he took from his neck a golden collar and gave it to Wiglaff. Likewise, he gave him his war mail and helmet, and said: “Enjoy it.” Then with failing breath, he said: “Thou art the last of our line of kinsmen. They have all gone to Odin’s heavenly hall, and now I follow them.” These were the hero’s last words.

Then from the thicket came the cowardly men who had fled and left Beowulf to fight the battle alone. They were blushing with shame. There was Wiglaff sitting there exhausted and bathing the head of Beowulf in a spring of cold water that came from the mouth of the cave. He was hoping still that he might bring him back to life. But all to no purpose, the king had closed his eyes never to open them again. When Wiglaff looked at the ten strong men standing there, who might have saved

## BEOWULF'S DEATH

Beowulf's life had they not fled, he said to them: "Cowards! that you should have fled and left your lord and king in the moment of danger! Ungrateful you are for the presents he has given you and for what he has been to you! A dastardly deed you have done in fleeing; with your aid at that critical moment the king's life could have been saved! It would be better by far to die than act the part of cowards! Death is pleasanter to the warrior than cowardice."

Wiglaff then sent a message of Beowulf's death to the king's army that all the morning had been encamped near the sea cliff. Soon the whole army came up to the mouth of the cave. There in the dust lay the dead king. Near by was the fireworm, full fifty steps in length as he lay stretched out, scorched in his own flames. Wiglaff then in a few words told of the battle, of Beowulf's last words, and his request that a monument be raised to his memory on a high cliff, overlooking the sea.

Seven men were then selected, and with a lighted torch they went in and explored the cave, and brought out into the sunlight the horde of treasures that for ages had been lying rust-eaten in the dark cavern. While some

## THE STORY OF BEOWULF

were looking at the treasures, others took hold of the firedrake and shoved him over the high cliff into the sea.

In the meantime carts had been brought, and in one was laid the body of the king, while in the other were piled the hoarded treasure never to be used more, but to go with the king to his last resting place. The funeral procession then formed and moved slowly to the uplands, overlooking the sea. Messengers had gone before, some to announce the hero's death and others to collect wood for the funeral pyre.

When the people had collected, the wood was piled up and hung around with helmets; battle-shields, and bright mail-shirts. With sorrowful hearts and sighs they laid their hero's body in the midst. Then the fire was lighted in several places. Black smoke boiled up, but in a moment it was shot through with red flame. The roaring of the flames, the howling of the wind and the thunder of ocean waves on the ledges beneath made a fit accompaniment for the young warriors as they marched around the fire, mourned their liege-lord and spoke of his deeds. Soon the body was utterly consumed by the flames.

Then the soldiers began to gather stones to

## A MONUMENT

build there a monument to Beowulf. Where the fire had burned was buried the horde of jewels, that no one might use them. The stones were laid in place, one upon another, until the monument towered so high that it could be seen by sailors miles out at sea. Thus ends the life of our hero, who, for fifty years, was king of the Geats. They said he was the kindest of kings and winsomest of men.

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

ONE dark stormy night a long time ago, in a land beyond the seas, old King Uther lay upon his bed dying. He was weeping and lamenting, not so much because he was leaving this world, but because he had no son or daughter to come after him and rule England. There were two old men who stood near the king, whose names were Bleys and Merlin. When they saw that their king was silent in death, they passed out into the black night and walked down toward the ocean where the great waves came rolling in from the deep.

The night was stormy, and they noticed that the waves grew larger and larger. They counted them—one, two, three, up to the ninth—which seemed to gather half the sea. Suddenly, on the highest crest of this wave, they saw a shining ship in the shape of a dragon, and all from stem to stern the deck was covered with shining people. No sooner had they seen the ship than it disappeared. But nevertheless this great wave came rolling in and



## MERLIN

tumbled at their feet. Strange to say out of this wave there rolled a little naked child, and Merlin picked it up and cried, "The King! The King! an heir for Uther!" Then the long wave swept up the beach, wrapt about the old man and flashed like fire. After which there was a calm, and the stars came out, and the elves and fairies blew their horns from cliff to cliff.

Merlin gave the little child to an old woman to nurse. He was given the name of Arthur, and as the years passed by he grew into a beautiful boy with blue eyes and golden hair. Merlin, who was a very wise old man, became the boy's teacher.

But let me tell you a story about the boy. One day, as Arthur was walking out all alone in the sunny fields, he came upon a little girl sitting down upon a bank of heath, weeping as if her heart would break, and saying: "I hate this fair world and all that's in it." She had been beaten for a fault of which she was not guilty. When she looked up there stood the boy Arthur. Whether he could walk unseen like his old teacher Merlin who was something of a wizard, she did not know, but there he stood smiling at her. He dried her tears,

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

comforted her heart, and was a child with her. But one day after that when she saw him again he was so dignified and cold she was afraid of him. But again when she saw him his ways were sweet and they played as children together. They were golden hours for her and for him. She said then, "Some day he will be King."

As Arthur grew into manhood he wanted a sword, as all boys did in those days. One summer day he was in his boat on the lake. All around him spread the shining water, above him bent the sky, soft and blue. He moved to the center of the little lake and stopped. It was noon, and he sat thinking. Perhaps he was wondering what he would do when he became a man. Suddenly he heard the water ripple, and near by he saw, rising from the lake a white arm and hand holding a sword. Arthur reached out and took the sword and then the hand disappeared.

The hilt of the sword was in the shape of a cross, studded with jewels that sparkled and flashed. He pulled it from the scabbard and the blade was so bright that it hurt his eye to look at it. On one side of the blade he saw cut in the steel in the oldest language of all the

## ARTHUR'S BOYHOOD

world, the words, "Take me," but on the other side, in the language of the people, "Cast me away." It made him sad to think he must cast it away. He took it to his old teacher Merlin, who was then a hundred winters old. Merlin said: "'Take me' means that you must take the sword, clear the forest, let in the light and make broad pathways for the hunter and the knight; break up the robber dens and bandit holds; drive back the heathen that come swarming over the seas, burning the houses and killing the people." Then he whispered into Arthur's ear and said: "Some day you may be king. After you have ruled the land and made it better, the time will come when you may cast the sword away, and that is a long way off."

The years passed. Not since that dark stormy night on which King Uther died had there been a strong ruler in England. The people fought among themselves. The heathen came swarming over the seas; the wild animals came from the woods and carried off the children. The land was going to ruin. One day the people came together and said: "We must make one man king." Whom do you suppose they crowned? Merlin, with his knowledge and power, had Arthur lifted up and

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

put on the throne. Many believed he was the rightful king, but others said: "Away with him, he is no king of ours, he is base-born." But then Arthur spoke to the people in the hall, and asked all of the young men who would help him rule the land to come forward. Many heard his manly voice and came and stood before him. He said to them: "Will you speak the truth; be pure; right the wrong; be strong yet gentle; be true in love; obey the king, and your conscience?" When they said "yes," they kneeled before him, and he made them his knights. When they arose from the knighting, he spoke to them in a low deep voice of authority and told them that he wished to make a good king, and that he wanted them to rule the land and make the world better, and the people happier.

While he stood speaking to them, for a moment every man seemed to favor the king; their faces were radiant. Then suddenly three rays of light fell as if from heaven, and lit up the faces of three tall queens, who stood near the throne to help the king at his need. Near him stood his old teacher Merlin, and the Lady of the Lake who, it was said, made and gave him Excalibur, the wonderful sword. After that,

## GUINEVERE

other young men came and took the vows of knighthood, until there were hundreds of knights. They were called Knights of the Round Table.

Then King Arthur went against the heathen, and in twelve great battles drove the last one from the country. One day, as he was passing with his army through the streets of a village, he saw, standing by a castle wall, a beautiful young woman. He did not know her, nor did she know him; for Arthur was clad simply as one of his knights, and not in his kingly robes. Arthur could not forget the face. He was in love with the young woman, and wanted to make her his wife and queen. When he returned to his palace, he called Sir Bedivere and two other knights, and sent them to search for the young woman.

The young woman's name was Guinevere, called the pearl of beauty, and her father was an old king, Leodogran, King of Camelaird. When the knights stood before him, and said, "King Arthur wishes Guinevere to be his wife and queen," the old man spoke roughly to them, and said, "Who is Arthur, that I should give my daughter in marriage to him? He is base-born, and not the son of a king. Even though



## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

he has helped me in battle, how can I, being a king, give my daughter in marriage to a man that is not a king, or the son of a king?" When Leodogran made further inquiries, and heard of Arthur's birth and boyhood, of the wonderful sword Excalibur, of the three rays of light at his coronation, of his pure life and great deeds, he still doubted.

He sat upon his seat and actually nodded, napped and kept the knights waiting. But while he napped, he dreamed, and in his dream saw a great battle-field, starting at his feet and sloping away as far as the eye could reach. On this field armies were passing and moving. Arthur the newly crowned king, with his army, was victorious and glorious. When Leodogran woke up, he called the knights and said: "Yes, Guinevere my daughter, may go."

Some time after that, King Arthur called Sir Lancelot, his best knight and warrior, and sent him to bring the Queen-to-be to his palace. Sir Lancelot and other knights with him rode away on horseback, while King Arthur stood and watched them from the gates as they disappeared. Guinevere was ready and came with Sir Lancelot. It was the first of May, when the earth was white with hyacinths. The



## THE MARRIAGE

woods were all abloom and seemed full of singing birds. Guinevere rode on horseback by Sir Lancelot. Each day couriers went before and pitched a tent where the Queen-to-be might rest at noon. The journey was soon at an end. Sir Lancelot had entertained Guinevere with talk of the tourney, the chase, the hunt, and of King Arthur and his noble deeds. Sir Lancelot was so strong, yet gentle and tender, that she could not help but like him, and love him. When King Arthur came out to meet her, clad in his knightly robes, he seemed so tall and dignified that she felt a little afraid of him. But she knew that she was to be his wife and queen. Straightway they went to the church, and there before the highest of altar shrines, the bishop made them man and wife, and blessed them. Then as they went from the church King Arthur's knights, clad in stainless white, marched before him with trumpets and a song:

“Blow trumpet, for the world is white with  
May!

Blow trumpet, the long night hath rolled away?  
Blow thro' the living world, 'Let the King  
reign!' ”

And that was the coming of King Arthur.

# THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

## PART ONE

### HOW GARETH BECAME A KNIGHT

ABOUT fifteen hundred years ago there lived up in the bleak North country that we now call Scotland, a brave and gentle young prince named Gareth. He dwelt in a great stone castle that overlooked many a mile of country, where his old, and now infirm father, King Lot, held sway. He, with his father and mother, lived alone in the castle, except for their many servants and retainers; and Gareth, with his strength and manliness was the very light of his mother's life. She denied him nothing that could add to his happiness, thus hoping to be able to keep him with her always.

But now that he had grown to manhood, Gareth was no longer happy, for he longed to go out into the great world beyond his home, and learn to become a knight. Just a few short weeks before, his two elder brothers, Sir Gawain and Sir Modred, had come home to

## GARETH'S AMBITION

visit their mother, and their stories of the brave knights, and their noble deeds of knight-hood at King Arthur's Court filled his heart with yearning.

Then, too, one fair day, when they had heard of Gareth's great strength, and how he could overcome all the lads in the country around, they had offered to joust with him in the meadow hard by. Overjoyed that he could at last test his strength against worthy opponents, he felt his spirit swell greatly within him, and charged with such strength and fury that he had thrown them both—first the brave Sir Gawain, then Sir Modred. Since that day such new strength and vigor had been his that it seemed to him that he must up and away to Camelot, where the King reigned, and where he could learn from the noble Sir Lancelot, how to become a great and worthy knight.

So one bright spring day, near the Easter-tide, he went to his mother, Queen Bellicent, and besought her to let him go. At first she would not give her consent, and Gareth was filled with sorrow when she pleaded with him to stay and comfort his father and herself in their old age, and learn to rule the land which he should one day govern. But Gareth knew

## THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

that he would never be truly great and manly until he had proved himself. Then he told her how his spirit burned within him, so that he would suffer anything only to become a true knight. So, thinking to test him, she asked if he would be willing to undergo a great ordeal to obtain his wish, and Gareth answered, "Yes;" for he felt that no ordeal would be too mighty for him.

Then his mother, trying him, said that he might go if he would serve as a knave in King Arthur's kitchen for a twelve-month and a day, for she believed that her proud and manly boy would never consent to a task so lowly.

For awhile Gareth answered not, but at last a bright smile lit his face as he kissed her and said, "Yea, sweet mother, that shall I do; for though I serve in person, yet shall I be free in soul, and I can see the knights joust and learn to live the noble life."

So at dawn next morning, while his mother was yet asleep, and not waking her for fear that she might withdraw her promise, Gareth with two men who had served him since his birth, slipped silently away from the castle and took the road toward Camelot. For a fortnight of days they journeyed southward;

## THE JOURNEY .

sometimes through dense, dark forests, sometimes along roadsides green with tender grass, and meadows flecked with golden buttercups, and sometimes past orchards all ablush with peach and apple blossoms, or showering down the pure white blooms of the plum and cherry trees like millions of tiny, white, fragrant snowflakes. At last, one fair morning, they saw in the distance, towering high above the valley mists, like a city suspended in the air, the lofty towers and high spires of Camelot, the home of the King.

Near noon they passed through the wonderful great gate that Merlin, the wise man, had built, and on along the streets of Camelot, where Gareth saw brave knights riding past, and fair ladies watching after them. Then his heart beat high within him, and he strode boldly on to Arthur's palace. But, when he entered the great hall of the Round Table, with its twelve high stained-glass windows, and saw King Arthur sitting on a dais at the further end giving judgment, he was abashed. Yet when he saw the kind eyes of the King he rushed forward quickly, and threw himself at his feet crying out, "A boon, O King!"

Then the King leaned forward, and all the

## THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

knights pressed close, observing him, for they could see that he was a goodly youth, and well-made, whom they deemed had come for some great adventure; but they turned away disappointed and disgusted when Gareth asked only that he might have meat and drink for a twelve-month and a day, in payment for which he would serve as a knave in the King's kitchen.

Sir Kay the seneschal, or keeper of the castle, laughed loudly and called out, "A kitchen knave! a goodly boon! Yea, grant it, noble sire, and I will give him work enough among the pots and pans to well pay for his meat and drink." But Sir Lancelot rebuked Sir Kay, for he could see that the lad was noble, even though he came with such a mean request, and believed that he would yet prove himself worthy.

So Gareth, when the King had granted his boon, went to serve in the kitchen. Sir Kay heaped many hard and disagreeable tasks upon him, but Gareth ever whistled blithely as he scoured the pots and pans and "graced the lowliest act in doing it." When the day's work was over he and his companions would sit together at the lower end of the hall to watch



## A KITCHEN BOY

the knights, and tell brave tales of them and their guests. And Gareth listened gladly to all the tales that were noble and pure, but never would he hear a tale of slander or cowardice or deceit, so that the other kitchen lads learned to love Gareth and respect him. Then, too, when there was jousting he would hie him away to the lists to watch the great knights shock and encounter, and always Gareth studied the bravery, the skill and the courtesy of Sir Lancelot, whom he had taken for his model knight.

When Gareth had served in the kitchen just one month and a day, he was sent for by the King, who told him that messengers had that morning come from the noble Queen Bellicent, to say that she had released him from his hard vow. Then was Gareth wild with delight, and besought the King that he would quickly grant him two further boons; first, that he should immediately be dubbed knight by Sir Lancelot, and then that he might be given the first quest that came into the hall that morning. So the King, after he had instructed Gareth how all his knights were bound to him by vows of hardihood, gentleness, lov-

## THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

ing faithfulness in love, and absolute obedience, he sent for Lancelot, and Gareth was made a knight. Then the King promised Gareth the first quest, and they proceeded together to the great judgment hall.

## THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

### PART TWO

#### GARETH'S QUEST

HARDLY had Arthur seated himself on his throne, when at the lower door of the hall there entered a maiden of high degree, and as beautiful as the Maytime. She knelt before the King and told him that her name was Lynette, and that she had ridden hard and far, to ask the aid of his best knight to rescue her sister, the Lady Lyonors, from four wicked brothers, who kept her imprisoned in her castle. They swore, she said, that unless Lady Lyonors were rescued by Sir Lancelot, that she should marry the youngest of them, called Death, who camped on a great plain below the castle of her sister. Then she told how the other brothers, Sir Morning Star, Sir Noon-day Sun, and Sir Evening Star, guarded the bridges and ford of a river that ran in three great loops around the castle.

Whereupon Gareth stepping boldly forward,

## THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

cried out, "The quest is mine, O King!" Then was Sir Kay provoked at such presumption, and commanded him to go back to his pots and pans and leave high enterprises for knights and noblemen. But the King remembered his promise and awarded Gareth the quest, though he privately commanded Sir Lancelot to follow behind the youth, to see that no harm should befall him.

But if Sir Kay were provoked, the Lady Lynette was indeed angry. She felt herself flouted by the King, and railed loudly at his discourtesy in thus awarding her quest to a mean kitchen knave, when she had asked for his bravest knight. So, right wrathfully, she hastened out of the hall, saying that she would have no knight if she could not have Sir Lancelot.

Gareth, however, strode boldly after her, and just outside of the lower door of the hall he found waiting a noble steed and rich armor, sent him by the King. When he was armed he seized the shield, mounted, and rode after the maiden, who, when he came within hearing, called loudly back to him, "Follow me not, Sir Knave, thou smellest of the kitchen-grease." Yet he heeded not her ungente

## A QUEST

words, but calling on her to lead, followed steadily on.

Then shortly they noticed a great dust rising behind them, and soon a rider appeared from out of it, who hailed Gareth, commanding him to return to his pots and pans. Then Gareth knew his old master Sir Kay, and turned prepared to meet him. And Sir Kay, when they shocked together, was unhorsed, and rolled in the dust; yet, Lynette thought no better of Gareth for his victory. Nay, indeed, as she spurred forward her palfrey, she called tauntingly back to him that in spite of his success he was still only a kitchen knave, it having been by foul mischance, rather than skill, that he had overcome a noble knight.

Lynette led steadily on, until near evening they entered a dark wood. When they had penetrated some distance into it, they heard loud cries ahead. Lynette deemed that her knave would surely flee this adventure, but taking the lead, he pressed boldly forward, and found that six robbers held bound the lord of that forest, and were about to drown him in a small mere, or lake, that lay at the foot of the hill, with its waters all crimson from the reflection of the sunset sky above. Then Gareth, sin-

## THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

gle-handed, fell on those six men, and when he had slain three, the others being but cravens, fled into the forest, and Gareth released the lord, whom they had held bound. When he had thanked Gareth he bade him and his lady ride on with him to his castle, where they could find lodging for the night.

But Lynette was still angry, and that evening when a right royal supper had been prepared in the hall of the castle she refused to sit at table with Gareth, and reviled him and called him all manner of foul names. Then was the lord of the castle surprised, for he had thought Gareth a worthy knight, and of Arthur's Table Round because of his bravery in falling on the six robbers, and he told Lynette that she was ungentle to revile one who had proven himself full noble in her service. Yet she still railed against him, saying that to her he smelled ever of the kitchen, and she again refused to eat with him. So the lord of the castle had a table set apart, but he himself ate with Gareth, for he believed him to be a true knight, despite Lynette.

In the early morning when they had departed from the castle, and gone some distance through the fresh, dewy forest, Lynette,



## GARETH UNDAUNTED

who still rode ahead, halted and called Gareth to her side. She said that he had now best turn back, for they were approaching the bridge held by the first brother, Sir Morning Star. She admitted, despite her scorn of him as a kitchen knave, that he had borne himself right knightly in his encounters with Sir Kay and the robbers the day before. Yet never, she told him, could he or any other save Sir Lancelot stand up against that bold ruffian ahead. Therefore, it was a pity, she added, that so brave a youth as he had proven himself should lose his life needlessly.

But Gareth answered her that the quest was his, and that where she led he would follow, and let his answer to her words be his deed.

Soon they reached the bridge that crossed the first loops of the river, and on the other bank saw standing a fair pavilion all blue and gold, except the dome which was crimson, and from it there floated a little purple pennant. In the door of the pavilion stood a huge knight, who called to Lynette to know whether she had brought her promised champion, Sir Lancelot.

Then Lynette laughed loudly and called out, "Nay, not Sir Lancelot, but in very scorn of you the King hath sent only a kitchen knave,

## THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

and you had best beware, Sir Morning Star, for he is all unused to knightly ways, and may do you some foul treachery.”

Sir Morning Star, angry, refused at first to fight with so mean an adversary, but when Gareth spurred forward disputing the bridge, he called three fair maidens, the daughters of the Dawn from his pavilion, and they came forth and armed him in pale blue armor, and gave him a blue shield emblazoned with a single star. Then he and Gareth encountered in the middle of the bridge, and when they rushed together they shocked with such violence that each was hurled backward from his horse, and lay as if dead. But they quickly arose and drew their swords, and Gareth lashed so fiercely that he drove Sir Morning Star back from the bridge, and, though his own shield was cleft, he finally struck such a mighty blow that he laid his enemy groveling on the ground.

Then did Sir Morning Star yield himself, and beseech Gareth to spare his life, and Gareth said that he would do it right willingly if the damsel Lynette should ask it. But Lynette called him insolent, and said that she would ask no favors of a knave, yet when Gareth unlaced the knight's helmet as if to slay him she called

## A QUEST

out loudly that he should not be so hardy as to slay one nobler than himself. So Gareth, saying that to do his lady's will was an abounding pleasure to him, spared the knight's life; but he took from him his shield, and commanded him to go to Arthur's court, and sue pardon for the breaking of his laws.

As they rode on, Lynette, who had called out words of encouragement to Gareth during the battle, railed at him again. She said that while he was fighting on the bridge the odor of the kitchen had come upon her a little more faintly, but now she scented it full twenty-fold. Then, as Gareth still gently and courteously bade her lead on, she sang a little song of the Morning Star that smiled in the blue heaven, and of how it now smiled more sweetly because once her love had smiled on her.

About midday they reached the next loop of the river, kept by Noonday Sun, the second brother, and lo! they saw him accoutered in burnished armor that shone like the sun, and mounted on a great red charger midway of the ford. He, seeing Gareth with his brother's shield, mistook him for Sir Morning Star, and called to know what he was doing so far away from his own loop of the river. But when

## THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

Lynette screamed to him that it was not his brother, but a kitchen knave from Arthur's court, who had overthrown him and taken his shield, he was very angry. So he and Gareth shocked together midstream, where there was no room for spears, and each struck four mighty strokes with his sword. Then, as Sir Sun raised his arm to strike the fifth and mightiest blow, the hoof of his horse slipped on a ledge of slate, and bore him down midway of the stream. Gareth drew him back with his lance, but he could fight no more, so yielded himself, and Gareth sent him also, on to the King.

Lynette, as she still led on, was full of scorn for this victory; for she said that Sir Sun's horse had slipped so that it was unfairly won. Yet she seemed happier than before, and sang another song telling how the sun shone so sweetly, the flowers bloomed so sweetly and the birds sang so sweetly, because twice that day her love had smiled on her. But she made fun of Gareth as knowing naught of flowers, save to garnish meats with, or birds either, save those that were fit for cooking.

Toward evening, sharply outlined against the rosy western glow, they saw the form of the

## A BATTLE

third brother guarding the last and longest of the bridges. He wore no armor, and at first seemed to Gareth to be naked, but Lynette told him that he was clad in tightly fitting skins that no sword could pierce. When he saw Gareth, and Lynette had informed him of the misadventure of his brothers, he called loudly, and an old grizzled hag in tattered, rust-colored garments, came forth from his stained and dingy pavilion, and armed him in old arms with a withering evergreen for crest. Then they rushed together madly on the bridge, and Gareth overthrew him, and, when they encountered with their swords overthrew him again, and yet again. But at each fall, quickly he uprose like fire, and struggled yet more fiercely than before, and ever Lynette called from the bank to Gareth to encourage him. She cried that he was her own knight-knave, as noble as any of the knights, and swore that the wind should never change again. Then new strength came to Gareth, and he struck harder than before, until his sword clashed with such force against the brand of his antagonist that he broke it off up to the hilt. Against all the rules of chivalry Sir Evening Star then sprang at him, and wound his wiry arms around him

## THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

until he was well-nigh strangled, but Gareth, making a last desperate effort, grasped his enemy, and straining, hurled him headlong from the bridge into the stream below.

Then Lynette came forward, and as he again called to her to lead on she said:

“I lead no more, ride thou at my side,  
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen knaves.”

Then she sang a song of the trefoil, or clover, sparkling on the rainy plain, and of the rainbow with three colors after rain; for thrice, she sang, her love had smiled on her.

But when she reproached herself for the revilings that she had cast against him, Gareth answered her gently, and said that she had been to blame only in that she had doubted the good faith of the King in giving her one unworthy for the quest. She had said her say, and his answer had been his deed. Nor did he think one fit to be a knight whose heart could be stirred to anger by any maiden's waywardness. Indeed, her taunts had only spurred him on to fight the harder, yet now, he said that she had spoken him so fair, he doubted whether any,



## SIR LANCELOT

yea, even the great Sir Lancelot himself, could prevail against him.

But suddenly, as they rode on to a nearby cave where they were to sup, one came behind them with a covered shield, and Gareth turned to meet him. And he, when he saw the star gleam on Gareth's shield, called out, "Stay felon! I avenge me for my friend," and so they clashed together. Gareth was unhorsed and slid softly to the ground. When he found himself thus, he laughed lightly, but Lynette was angry and called shame to him that he was so soon again tumbled into a kitchen knave. Then Gareth told her that he laughed because he was both surprised and amused, to think that he, a knight, the son of King Lot and Queen Bellicent, and victor of the bridges, and the ford, could thus be thrown.

So Lancelot, for it was he who had followed Gareth, and seeing him with the shield of Sir Morning Star, thought he had been slain by that villain, called gladly to him, saying that it was no disgrace for one so wearied from a hard day's fighting, to be thrown. He then welcomed him to the fellowship of the Table Round as a knight after the King's best wish;

## THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

a knight who had been victorious over his foes, courteous and gentle when reviled, and merry in defeat.

Then they passed on together to the cave, and Gareth, after he had supped, slept heavily. Lynette watched by him, and thought tenderly how full worthy and noble a knight he had proved himself. After a time Lancelot came out and sat with her, and promised that Gareth should use his own fresh charger, and his famous shield with the fierce blue lions in the ensuing encounter with the fourth brother, so that the villain might think that he fought against Lancelot himself.

When he awoke, Gareth was refreshed and filled with new strength, so they armed him, and together the three rode on through the night. But as they rode Lynette was filled with fear for her knight's safety, and begged him to yield up the quest to Lancelot, as he had already proved himself full noble, but Gareth laughed and answered nay.

At last, toward the dawning, but while it was yet night, they drew near the Castle Perilous, built high on a rock that overhung the plain below. Dark clouds floated in mid-heaven, and hid the stars, but against the faint crimson

## THE QUEST IS WON

glow along the western horizon, they saw pitched a huge, black pavilion with a black banner. By it hung a long, black horn on which Gareth blew three mighty blasts.

At the first blast lights twinkled in the windows of the castle above. At the second, Lady Lyonors appeared at one of the windows, waving welcome. But at the third blast there was silence for an instant, then slowly the door of the great black pavilion opened, and noiselessly there rode forth on a coal-black charger a great knight, clad all in black. On his helmet he bore a skull for a crest, and on his corselet had painted the ribs and breast bone of death. So fearful was he to behold, that Lady Lyonors and her maidens wrung their hands, and wailed, while one fainted, and even Sir Lancelot felt his blood run cold.

But Gareth charged boldly forward, and as they clashed together, those who were so hardy as to watch the sight, saw a great wonder; for Death was cast to ground. And as he arose Gareth cleft the skull; then with a mightier blow his helm, between the sides of which, as they fell apart, emerged the bright and smiling face of a boy. Quickly he called to Gareth not to slay him, for his brothers he said had

## THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

made him play the trick, disguising himself as Death, for they never dreamed that any knight would be able to cross the bridges and the ford.

So Gareth spared his life, and as the day broke they all went together into the castle, where the Lady Lyonors had prepared them a great feast. Then they all made merry over Death, who, despite their fears, had proved only a bright and blooming boy, and all praised Sir Gareth, who had so nobly won his quest.

## THE PASSING OF KING ARTHUR

AFTER King Arthur had ruled a long time and made the land better, the heathen again came over the seas to take the land. Some of his own knights proved untrue and joined with the heathen and fought against the king. King Arthur gathered together his true knights and went against the heathen and traitors, driving them back, league by league, until they came to the sea and there they could go no farther. They camped and got ready to fight, and it was King Arthur's last battle. A sad time it was for King Arthur. Sir Lancelot had forsaken him, and Guenivere, his queen, had become wicked and worldly, until the people talked about her so much that she fled to Almesbury, there to live with the nuns.

On the night before the battle, Sir Bedivere passed by the tent, heard the voice of Arthur, and as he listened for a moment, heard him moaning and saying:

## PASSING OF KING ARTHUR

“I found Him in the shining of the stars,  
I mark’d Him in the flowering of His fields,  
But in His ways with men I find Him not.”

\* \* \* Toward the close of his prayer, he heard him say: “My God thou hast forgotten me in my death; nay, I pass, but shall not die.” It was a cold dreary day, the last day of the year. And the two armies met on the sea beach. Face to face they fought with battle-ax, sword, shield and spear. While they were fighting a dense mist came up from the sea and rested on the battle-field, so that all was in confusion; enemy slew enemy and friend slew friend.

All day long the noise of battle was heard; the crashing of battle-axes, the clashing of swords, the groans and cries of the wounded and dying, until at twilight nearly every man had fallen in death, and no sound was heard save the seething of the sea. From the north came a cold wind that blew the mist aside and with the wind came the tide. King Arthur looked across the field, but saw no man moving there. The tide had come up from the sea and hollow helmets and shattered brands and dead men were washed about in the waves.



## PASSING OF KING ARTHUR

King Arthur saw Sir Bedivere, the last left of all his knights, and said: "Hearest thou the great voice that shakes the world? Oh Bedivere, on my heart has fallen confusion and I seem but a king among the dead." Then bold Sir Bedivere replied: "Yes, king, my king, king everywhere, king even of the dead." And seeing that King Arthur was wounded he bore him to an old chapel near the field that stood on a strait of barren land. On one side lay the ocean, and on one lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere, and said: "I am sore wounded, and without help cannot live until morning. Take the sword Excalibur. You remember how one summer noon a white arm rose up from the bosom of the lake holding the sword; how I took it and have worn it like a king. But now take the sword and cast it back in the mere, then come and tell me what you saw and heard." Then Sir Bedivere passed from the chapel down over the jutting rocks until he came to the shining levels of the lake. As he looked at the jewel-handled sword and saw the sparkling diamonds, it seemed wrong to throw such a wonderful sword away. So he stuck it in the mud and

## PASSING OF KING ARTHUR

walked slowly back to the king. Then King Arthur said: "Tell me what you saw and heard." Sir Bedivere said: "I heard the ripple washing in the reeds, and the wild water lapping on the crag."

Then said the king: "You have disobeyed me. You would have seen a sign, a hand, or a moving of the mere. Go, obey me, come back and tell me what you saw and heard." Then the second time Sir Bedivere came to the water's edge. But when he looked again at the wonderful sword and saw how curiously it was made, he said aloud to himself: "If I cast it away a precious thing will be lost. I would obey the king, but he is sick and out of his head, and knows not what he is doing. It would be far better to save the sword and when the king is gone it will hang in the hall and speak for him, his pure life and deeds." And so the second time he hid Excalibur and went slowly back to the wounded king. King Arthur was breathing heavily, and said: "Tell me what you saw and heard." Sir Bedivere said: "I heard the long wave washing in the reeds and the water lapping on the crag."

Then King Arthur raised himself, and said: "Ah, miserable, unknighly, traitor-hearted.

## KING ARTHUR WOUNDED

Obey me, or I will slay thee with my hands.” Then Sir Bedivere ran quickly, seized the sword and threw it with all his might. The sword whirled over and over, flashed in the moonlight and fell like a falling star. Just before it struck the water an arm clothed in white samite, wonderful, seized the sword, brandished it three times and drew it under the water. Sir Bedivere ran back to the king, and Arthur said: “Ah, I see by your eyes you have obeyed me.” Sir Bedivere told him what he had seen.

Then King Arthur, breathing hard, said: “My end draws nigh. I must go. Take me to the sea. I fear my wound hath taken cold and I shall die.” Then Sir Bedivere lifted him tenderly, the man above all men he loved and worshiped, and bore him down to the water’s edge. Into Sir Bedivere’s ear King Arthur said: “Quick, quick, I fear it is too late and I shall die.”

When they came in sight of the lake, there they saw a black barge and as they drew nearer all the deck seemed full of people in long black robes. Among them were three tall queens with crowns of gold, beautiful, like fairy queens, and they were weeping. King Arthur said: “Place

## PASSING OF KING ARTHUR

me in the barge." The queens put forth their hands and took him. The tallest laid his head in her lap, removed the casque, chafed his hands, and weeping, dropped bitter tears upon his brow. Then Sir Bedivere said: "Oh me, my king, what must I do, you're going, the knights are dead and I alone am left." Slowly from the barge the king replied: "I am going a long way to the Island-valley of Avilion, a place beside a summer sea to heal me of my grievous wound. If you never see my face again, pray for my soul, for more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

Then, like some full-plumed swan, the boat moved away from the shore and turned to the open sea. As it went out over the sea, lo! the light from the sun about to rise lit up the sky and water, and as the boat grew smaller and smaller in the distance, Sir Bedivere climbed higher and stood shading his eyes with his hand, gazing upon the boat until like a little speck it was lost in the light of the rising sun. As he stood there in the stillness of the winter's morning, it seemed to him he heard, as it were, from beyond the limits of the world, a great shout like an army returning from battle victorious around their king. Then as

## PASSING OF KING ARTHUR

he turned and went away he groaned and said to himself: "The king has gone." Then came to his mind the weird rhyme of Merlin:

"From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

Many said that King Arthur would come again. He never did as they expected him, but he is with us to-day in song and story and art to make us stronger, purer and more spiritual.

## A BOY'S VISIT TO SANTA CLAUS\*

ONCE upon a time there was a little boy who talked a great deal about Santa Claus. He talked to his father, his mother, his brother and sisters, until it was Santa Claus at the breakfast table, Santa Claus at dinner and Santa Claus at supper. This little boy had been told that far away in the Northland lived Santa Claus. He was sitting by the fire one day watching the embers glow, and seeing castles in the glowing embers. There is Santa Claus' house, he said, the great building covered with snow. "Why can't I go to see him?"

The little boy had worked and had saved some money. He took the money and went down to the depot, bought a ticket, and before his father or mother knew about it was gone to see Santa Claus. He traveled a long time on the train, and by and by reached the end of the railroad.

\* This story is not given here as one of the great stories, but as a little story based on the great St. Nicholas legend, and was suggested to me by a cantata—"A Visit to Santa Land," which I saw many years ago.



## ON A SHIP

He could go no farther on the train for there was a great wide ocean, but people crossed the ocean and so must the little boy, or at least a part of it, in order to reach Santa Claus' land. There was a great ship lying in port soon to sail over the seas, and along with many people who went aboard the ship, went the little boy. Soon every sail was spread and out from the port went the ship leaving far behind them the town.

The ship sailed and sailed a long time, and finally land came in sight. They had reached an island lying somewhere far out in the mid-seas. Some of the people went ashore and so did the little boy. But what a funny land it was to the little boy, all the people were little people. The grown men were not taller than the little boy, and they rode little ponies that were not larger than dogs. Then the little boy asked, "What land is this, does Santa Claus live here?" And they said—"No."

"This is the land that lies east of the sun  
And west of the moon.  
You have not come too soon.  
Northward you must go  
To the land of ice and snow."

## A BOY'S VISIT TO SANTA CLAUS

And so one day the little boy found a ship that was going to sail to the Northland and in this ship he went. The ship sailed and sailed a long time until it finally came to where the sea was all frozen over, to the land of icebergs and snow fields. The ship could go no farther, so what do you suppose the little boy did then? He was in the land of the reindeer, and over the snow fields he went in search of Santa Claus.

One day, as he was traveling over the snow fields to find Santa Claus' house, he saw not far away what at first seemed to be a hill, but soon he saw that it was not a hill, but a house covered with ice and snow. "That must be Santa Claus' house," he said. Soon the little boy was standing in front of the great building whose towers seemed to reach the sky. Up the shining steps he went and soon he was standing in front of the door. The little boy saw no door bell and so he knocked on the door. No one answered, and then louder he knocked again. Still no one answered. He began to feel afraid; perhaps this was the house of a giant. If Santa Claus lived there, he might be angry with him for coming, but once more he knocked. And then he heard a noise far down

## SANTA CLAUS' HOUSE

at the other end of the hall. Someone was coming. Then suddenly the latch went "click," and the door stood wide open, and who do you suppose was there? Santa Claus? No; a little boy with blue eyes and a bright sweet face. Then the little boy said, "Good morning. Does Santa Claus live here?" And the other little boy said, "Yes. Come in, come in. I am Santa Claus' little boy." He took him by the hand and said, "I am very glad to see you."

Then the two little boys walked down the long hallway, doors on this side and doors on that, until they came to the last door on the left-hand side. On this door Santa Claus' little boy knocked, and a great voice said, "come in." He opened the door and walked in, and who do you suppose was there? Santa Claus? Yes, there was Santa Claus himself; a great, big fat man sitting by the fire, with long white beard, blue eyes and the merriest, cheeriest face you ever saw. Then Santa Claus' little boy said, "Father, here is a little boy who has come to see you." Santa Claus looked down over his spectacles and said, "Well, how are you? I am mighty glad to see you. Yes, yes, I know him. I have been to

## A BOY'S VISIT TO SANTA CLAUS

his house on many a night and filled up his stocking. How are Elizabeth and Louise and Katherine?" Over on the other side of the fireplace sat Mrs. Santa Claus. She was a grandmother-looking woman, with white hair and gold-rimmed spectacles. She was sitting by the fire knitting; she put her arms around the little boy and kissed him.

Then the two little boys sat down in front of the fire and talked together. By and by, Santa Claus' little boy said to the other little boy, "Don't you want to go over the building and see what we have in the different rooms? This building has a thousand rooms." And the little boy said, "who-o-o-o-e." And Santa Claus' little boy said, "Yes, and something different in every room."

Then they went in a large room and what do you suppose was in there? Nothing but doll babies; some with long dresses and some with short; some with black eyes and some with blue. Then into another room they went, and it was full of toys, wagons and horses; another room was full of story books; another room was a candy kitchen where Santa Claus made candy; another room was a workshop where Santa Claus made toys for the children. Then

## THE FORBIDDEN ROOM

they went in a long, large room, the largest of them all, and in this room were a great many tables. On these tables were suits, cloaks and hats and shoes and stockings for the children.

The little boy wanted to know what they did with so many clothes, and Santa Claus' little boy said, "We take these to the little children who have no father or mother to make them clothes." And so they went through all the rooms of the great building, except one, which was away upstairs in the corner. What was in this room no one would tell the little boy, nor would they take him into the room. And the little boy wondered what was in the room.

The little boy stayed at Santa Claus' house several days and he had a splendid time. Some days the two little boys would slide down the hill on a sled, some days they would hitch up the reindeer and go sleighing, some days they would go into the candy kitchen and help Santa Claus make candy, or into the workshop and help him make toys.

But one day something happened. Santa Claus came to the little boy and said, "I am going away to-day for a little while; my wife and my little boy are going with me. Now,"



## A BOY'S VISIT TO SANTA CLAUS

he said, "you can go with us or you can stay here and keep house for us while we are gone." The little boy thought to himself that Santa Claus had been so good to him that he would stay and keep house while Santa Claus was away. So he said he would stay and then Santa Claus gave him a great bunch of keys and said, "Now you can go in all the rooms and play, but you must not go in that room upstairs in the corner." The little boy said, "All right," and with that Santa Claus, his wife and his little boy went down the steps, got into the sleigh, wrapped themselves up in furs, popped the whip and away they went! The little boy stood and watched them until they disappeared behind the snow hills.

Then he turned and went back into the house. He felt like a little man in that great house all by himself. From room to room he went. He went into the game room and rolled the balls. Some of the balls were so large that they were as high as the little boy's head. They were of rubber, and if you would drop one from the top of the house it would bounce clear back to the top. The little boy went into the candy kitchen and ate some of the candy. He went into the workshop and worked on some toys, then into



## HE PEEPED IN

the library and read some of the books, then into the parlor and banged on the piano.

But after a while, the little boy was tired, and he said, "I wish Santa Claus would hurry and come back." He was lonely. And so he thought he would go up on the housetop and look out to see if he could see Santa Claus coming home. Up the steps he went. When he reached the top, there was another flight. Up these he went and still another flight; up, up, he went until it seemed he had gone a thousand steps. But, finally, he came out on top. The little boy stood there with his hands on the railing and looked out, but all he could see were the snow fields, white and glistening. Santa Claus was not in sight. He could see the track over the snow that the sleigh had made, but that was all.

Then down the steps he came, and it just happened that he came by the room that Santa Claus told him he must not go in. As he passed, he stopped in front of the door and said to himself, "I wonder what they have in that room and why they did not want me to go in?" He took hold of the knob and gave it a turn, but the door was locked. Then he shut one eye and peeped through the keyhole, but he

## A BOY'S VISIT TO SANTA CLAUS

could see nothing; it was all dark. Then he put his mouth at the keyhole and blew through it, but he could hear nothing. Then he put his nose there and smelled, but he could smell nothing "I wonder what they have in the room?" he said, "I believe I will see just for fun which one of these keys will fit in the lock."

The little boy had in his hand the great bunch of keys. He tried one key and that would not fit, then he tried another and another and another, and kept on until he came to the last key. Now, he said to himself, "if this key does not fit I am going." He tried it and it was the only key on the bunch that would fit. "Now," he said, "I shall not go into the room, but I will just turn the key and see if it will unlock the lock. It may fit in the lock and then not unlock the lock." He turned the key slowly and the latch went "click," "click," and the door flew wide open. What do you suppose was in the room? It was all dark; the little boy could see nothing. He had his hand on the knob and it seemed to him that his hand was caught between the knob and key, and somehow, as the door opened, it pulled him in. When he stepped into the room, he felt a breeze blowing and, more than that, as he stepped down, he

## A BOY'S VISIT TO SANTA CLAUS

found the room did not have any bottom; just a dark hole.

Well, as the little boy stepped over into the room, he felt himself falling, away down, down, down yonder. He shut his eyes, expecting every moment to strike something and be killed. But, before he did, someone caught him by the shoulders and shook him and said, "Wake up! Wake up." He opened his eyes and where do you suppose the little boy was? At home. It was Christmas morning and his father was calling him to get up. The sun was shining across his little bed. He looked towards the fireplace and there all the stockings were hanging full. The little boy had been to see Santa Claus, but he went by that wonderful way we call "DREAM-LAND."

## THE GREAT TEACHER

IN Western Asia, not far from the great sea, lying low among the hills is a lake. It is not of large proportions, but its waters are clear and deep and its shores are fringed with palms and dotted here and there with little villages, the home of peasant and fisherman. Many centuries ago the Romans built a paved road-way connecting the little towns that stood every four or five miles apart, fronting the lake with their wharves running out into the water. Some days the bosom of the lake would be white with sails,—some fishing, some on pleasure, while others were trafficking, making altogether a place of enchanting beauty. We know of the lake to-day, however, not because of its beauty but because a great teacher once lived there and by his life and deeds made sacred its shores.

This teacher was reared in a little town not many miles west of the lake. When he grew up into young manhood, he felt called to be a teacher, and one day he was missed from his

## ON THE LAKE SHORE

native town. He had gone out in the great world to teach. But word soon came back that people were wonderstruck at his teaching. One day when he returned to his native town, he was invited to speak in the synagogue, but what he said displeased the people so much that they drove him away from his home.

Then he came and lived with some friends on the lake shore. He taught in a way so different from other teachers, said and did so many wonderful things that people came from far and near to see him. One day the teacher was walking along the lake shore while a crowd of people followed him and pressed upon him. He saw some little boats moored to the shore, and stepping into one of them, sat down. As he looked into the faces of the people his heart went out to them, for he wanted to speak to them and teach them; but what could he say that would interest them all? Most of them were ignorant; few of them were educated; there was the barefooted fisherman, the sunburnt peasant, the fair-skinned rabbi, the mother with her babe, and the young people who had come that they might say, "I saw the color of his hair and eyes."

But listen, the teacher is beginning to speak.

## THE GREAT TEACHER

and he said: "Once upon a time a man dragged a net in the sea and caught a lot of fish,"—he told them a story. "Once upon a time a man sowed some seed in the field,"—still another story. At first some in the audience talked and made noises, but the teacher continued: "Once there was a man who had a hundred sheep." "Once there was a man who had two sons." As these stories were told so directly and simply, yet with such pathos and tenderness, every heart was touched, and all grew so quiet, that when the teacher paused for an important word in the climax of his story you could hear the little swallows that chirped above their heads and skimmed away through the sky, or you could hear the shepherd as he pastured his flock in the afternoon shade of the hill slopes.

Do you see that picture to-day? The teacher sitting in the boat, while behind him spread the shining water and above him bent the bluest of Galilean skies? In front of him were the multitudes, some near the water's edge, while others were standing and sitting further back on the bowlders and the sloping shore.

But now the teacher is through speaking. He has delivered his message, and he said to the men who were his companions and pupils,



## STORM ON THE LAKE

“I want to cross to the other side of the lake.” As the boat moved away the crowd stood for a moment in silence. The stillness of the lake shore and afternoon sky, and the deep calm of the teacher and his words, had touched their hearts with a strange peace. For awhile they stood watching the boats, and then, as they went back to their homes, they said in their hearts, “Where did that man come from? Where did he find such beautiful words? Through what realms of light and spirituality has he moved?”

The teacher had grown weary of the day's work and he lay down in the boat to rest. Taking a cushion on which the rowers sat he folded it under his head for a pillow while the water striking against the prow of the boat soon lulled him to sleep. And now they have nearly crossed to the east side of the lake. It is late in the afternoon. Clouds have been gathering, a storm is coming and it is getting dark. They tried to reach the shore, but before they could, a storm of wind and rain and thunder burst upon them. The waves were so high that they rolled over the deck and into the boat.

The men who manned the boats had been in many a storm on the lake before, but in none

## THE GREAT TEACHER

like this. They were panic stricken and ran to the teacher who was lying asleep in the hinder part of the boat. They woke him and said, "Teacher, teacher, do you not care that our lives are in danger?" Then the teacher looked out over the lake; by him swept the blinding mist and rain, but he did not seem to be afraid and said to the storm: "Peace! Be quiet! Be still!" Immediately the wind died out, the clouds broke away over their heads, and there was a calm. Then he said to his men. "What makes you such cowards? Where is your faith?" They were astonished and didn't know what to think of a man who could still a storm.

A few minutes after that the keels of their boats were grating on the sandbar. They had reached the other side, and getting out walked up on the shore. The full moon was just beginning to rise in the hills and flooded lake and shore with its light. The teacher and his men were getting ready to spend the night there, to sleep under the stars, when they saw between them and the full moon some object coming down the hill toward them. Soon they saw it was a man, and a mad man at that. He came running up to the teacher, hair disheveled, eyes wild and glaring, waving his arms and

## THE MADMAN

shouting, "Why do you come here to punish me before my time?" Poor fellow! he had once lived in houses as other people, but now evil spirits had taken possession of him, and he stayed in the mountain caves where he would go half naked and cut himself with stones, until he became so fierce and wild that he was a terror to the whole neighborhood. Sometimes his friends would bind him, and try to keep him at home, but he would break the chains and go back to the mountains, where night and day could be heard his cry of anguish.

The teacher seemed not in the least afraid of him, but looked upon him with pity; he understood his suffering and commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Then the evil spirit spoke through the man and said: "We will come out if you will let us enter into those swine up yonder on the hillside." The teacher gave the evil spirits permission. Then these demons came out of the man, and no sooner had they done so than the swine took fright and started down the hill in a stampede. Suddenly they came upon the shining levels of the lake where the shore was steep and high. They were running so fast that they could not stop; those in front were crowded by those behind

## THE GREAT TEACHER

until the whole herd, about two thousand, went over the precipice into the lake and all well-nigh were drowned. The men who kept the swine ran to the town where the masters lived and told them about it.

The next morning, their masters, the men who owned the swine, with other people from that region, came out to see what had happened. And there in the fragrance of the early morning air on the lake shore they saw the teacher, his companions, and the man who had been such a terror to the neighborhood. But what a wonderful change had come over the man! Instead of being wild and naked, he was sitting at the feet of the teacher, clothed and in his right mind.

The people could not understand it. They were afraid of a man who could do such wonderful things, they had lost their property and they begged him to leave. The teacher did not usually stay in places where the people did not want him, and so he went down to get into the boat. Just as he was stepping into the boat, the man whom he had healed said, with pleading voice: "May I go with you?" The teacher turned, placed his hand on the man's shoulder, and flooding him with the light of those eyes,

## A NEW LIFE

said, with a gentle voice: "No, not now. Go back to your home where the people were afraid of you and the little children would run and hide when they saw you coming—go back there and live a better life." That in a measure seemed to satisfy the man. Then the sails were spread and the boats moved away. The man stood on the shore and shading his eyes with his hands, watched the boats until they passed out of sight. Then he turned and with a strange new light beaming from his face, went all through the region where he had been such a terror and told the people what the Great Teacher had done for him.

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